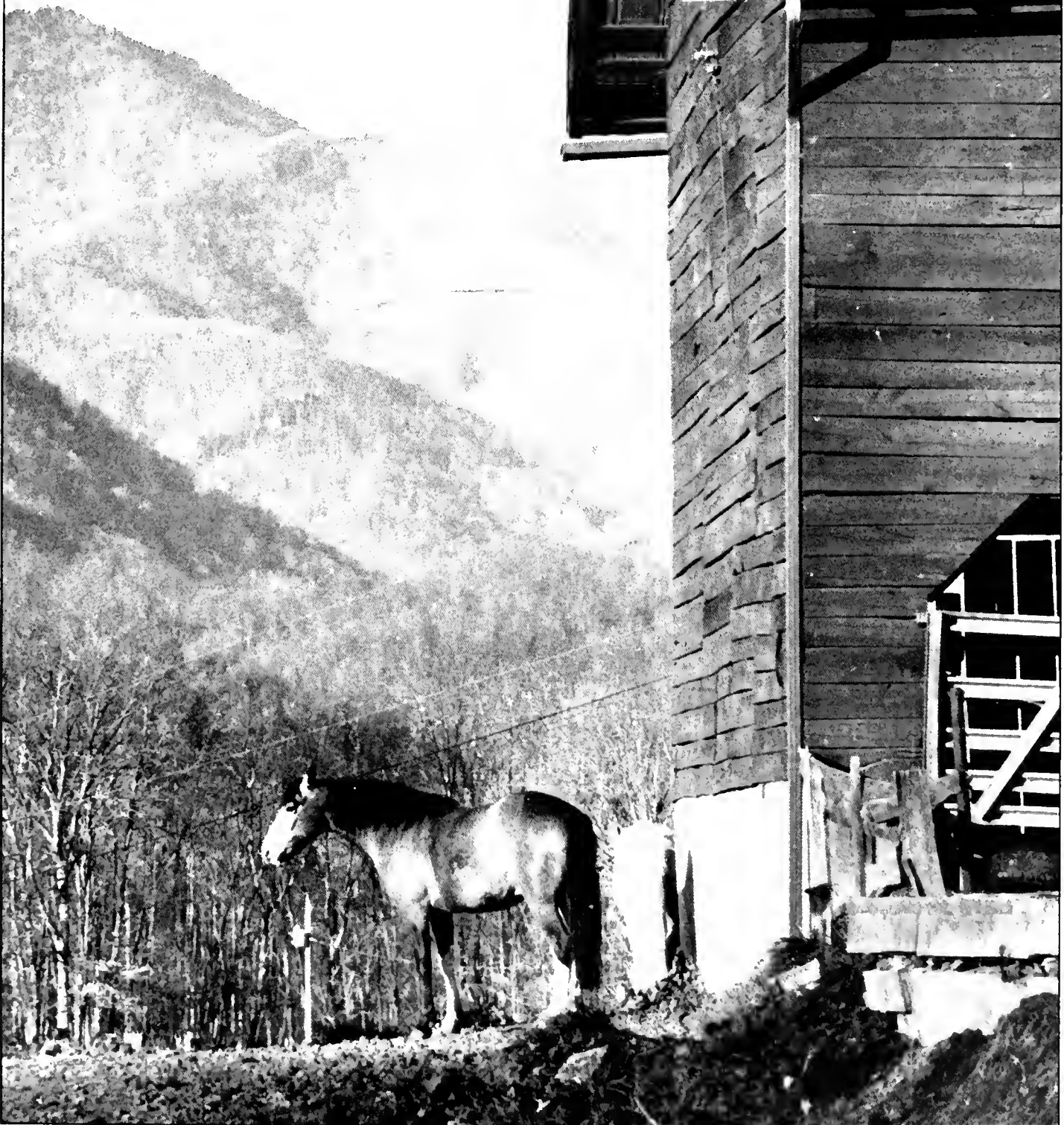


# Carolina Planning

Volume 18  
Number 2



Western North Carolina

---

## Editor's Note

---

With this issue of *Carolina Planning*, we have chosen a geographic rather than a topical boundary for these articles. As noted by David Quinn, the Blue Ridge Mountains have traditionally divided the mountain residents from those from "off the mountain." It is doubtful if any of our authors would agree on a single boundary for the mountain region, nor is that of critical importance here. We focus on issues that, while not unique to this area, are heightened by its history, culture and topography.

Western North Carolina's riches, from mountain vistas to rich mineral deposits and timber stands, have differentiated it from the rest of the state and driven its development over the past two centuries. The mountain region remains relatively isolated from the rest of the state, despite the building of rail lines in the 1880s and the federal highway system in this century. State interest in the development of the region remains high, however, as evidenced by attempts to institute land-use planning in the mid-1970s and the recent formation of a study commission to again look at both state-wide and mountain-area land-use planning.

David Quinn provides the historical and economic setting for the region and the remainder of the articles in this issue. The following set of articles cover a broad range, from economic development to forestry and archeology. The mountains of western North Carolina remain predominantly rural. Consequently, economic development is a high priority for every mountain county. Bruce Boggs describes the Regional Economic Strategy Project, which has enhanced the region's economy by promoting leadership on key issues. William Weeks directs the MAY Coalition, an innovative anti-poverty effort in Mitchell, Avery and Yancey counties.

The National Forest Services update to the Natahala-Pisgah National Forest plan evoked strong reactions in the mountain region. Walton Smith, a life-long forester, describes alternative management strategies for forestry operations and calls for a return to the practices that were in place through the 1960s. Michael Hartley reaches much further back, to the eighteenth century, in his description of the Moravian settlement in North Carolina and their reliance on comprehensive land-use planning.

The final section deals specifically with the contentious issue of land-use planning in western North Carolina. Frank Caldwell and Susan Smith review a 1981 report on land-use planning in the mountain region and provide updates on the status of each of the reports recommendations. Garry Cooper provides the perspective of an academic to the debate, arguing the merits of mandated planning, tempered by a number of caveats for the legislative study commissions. Brian Ahman gives us the first look at the results of the Mountain Outdoor Recreation Alliances study of outdoor recreation in western North Carolina, directly affecting the traditional economic development vs. environmental protection debate. Ginny Faust highlights some of the difficulties of land-use planning in the mountain region and provides a personal recipe for successful planning. Susan Smith returns with a description of community forums on land-use conducted in the region in the Fall of 1982 and includes recommendations for successful land-use planning programs gleaned from those forums.

Our intent in having western North Carolina as the focus of this issue was to investigate a region for which we have respect. We hope you will find that each of the authors in this issue is motivated by an abiding interest in the people and places of this region. We also hope that this issue of *Carolina Planning* helps to focus and extend the existing discussions and experiments surrounding planning in western North Carolina, both within the region and the state.

Steven Stichter

### EDITORS

John Anton

Dan Broun

Patricia McGuire

Steven Stichter

---

*Carolina Planning* is published biannually by students in the Department of City and Regional Planning, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with the assistance of funds from the John A. Parker Trust Fund, Department of City and Regional Planning, and the North Carolina chapter of the American Planning Association and the Department of City and Regional Planning Alumni Association.

Subscriptions to *Carolina Planning* are available at an annual rate of \$12.00, or \$20.00 for two years. Back issues are available for \$6.00 per issue.

*Carolina Planning* welcomes comments and suggestions on the articles published. Please address all correspondence to: *Carolina Planning*, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Campus Box # 3140, New East Building, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599-3140.

---

*Photograph and Illustration Credits:* Colburn Gem and Mineral Museum: 1; Duncan Quinn: 7, 34, 35; Mark Haskett: 10, 15; The North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill: 13; William Weeks: 18, 19, 20; Spencer Ainsley, *Lenoir News Topic*: 22; Walton Smith: 23; Michael Hartley: 26; Moravian Archives, Southern Province, Winston-Salem, NC: 28; *The Mountaineer*: 32, 51; Garry Cooper: 38, 39; Brian Ahman: 42, 43; Jon Serenius: 45, 49; Bertha Johnson: 46.

*Cover:* Design by Steven Stichter and John Anton; Photo Credit: *The Mountaineer*.

Printed by the University of North Carolina Printing Department on recycled paper.

---

*Carolina Planning* wishes to thank Carroll Cyphert, David Brower, Pat Coke, Asta Cooper, Bruce Egan, Renee Schwalberg, Jonathan Howes, and the Center for Urban and Regional Studies.

---

© 1993 Department of City and Regional Planning

# Carolina Planning

A Student-Run Publication of the University of North Carolina  
Department of City and Regional Planning

Volume 18  
Number 2

---

Background	<b>The Changing Patterns of Development in Western North Carolina</b>	David H. Quinn	2
------------	---	----------------	---

---

Articles	<b>Strategic Planning for Regional Economic Development in Western North Carolina</b>	Bruce S. Boggs	9
	<b>The MAY Coalition: Innovators in Economic Development and Job Creation</b>	William Weeks	17
	<b>Managing Western North Carolina's National Forests</b>	Walton R. Smith	21
	<b>Planning as an Historic Resource: An Example from the Western Piedmont of North Carolina</b>	Michael O. Hartley	25

---

Special Focus: Land Use	<b>Western North Carolina Planning Policies: A Decade in Review</b>	Frank L. Caldwell Susan M. Smith	31
	<b>To Plan or To Continue Not to Plan in Western North Carolina...</b>	Garry V. Cooper	37
	<b>Exploring Outdoor Recreation in Western North Carolina</b>	Brian F. Ahman	41
	<b>The Challenge of Land-Use Planning in Haywood County, or Real Planners Never Use Plan 'A'</b>	Ginny Faust	44
	<b>Planning Challenges Facing Western North Carolina</b>	Susan M. Smith	50

# The Changing Patterns of Development in Western North Carolina

---

David H. Quinn

**T**he release and popular appeal of the movie *The Last of the Mohicans* has again showcased the mountains of western North Carolina to a national audience. Although the film depicts a location in upstate New York in 1757, the film's credits and promotional material have advertised the set locations throughout the North Carolina mountains.

The suitability and use of the mountain area for such a film highlights some of the changes taking place in this popular region of North Carolina. The mountain region of North Carolina is one of the few areas in the country that still possesses some of the unique natural characteristics of the New York mountains in 1757. These natural features exist because of historic circumstances which are viewed as beneficial by some and detrimental by others. This article will attempt to focus on the natural and cultural circumstances that have affected the attitudes towards change occurring in the region today.

The mountain people, culture and economy are products of the geography and natural resources of the mountains. While some settlers came to the region to seek refuge and land ownership in an isolated area, others came to exploit the natural resources. The Native Americans and early European settlers in the region lived from the land and the flora and fauna of the region. Later arrivals came to the region as refugees from unhealthy climates or as tourists to enjoy the recently discovered scenic beauty of a region uniquely situated between northern and southern latitudes.

---

*David H. Quinn is the senior planner in the Asheville office of the Division of Community Assistance. He received an A.B. in Geography from the University of North Carolina and did his graduate work in planning at the Georgia Institute of Technology. A previous contribution by Mr. Quinn appears in volume 16, number 1 of Carolina Planning.*

The natural features of the land and the social and economic characteristics of the people attracted to the region have established patterns of development, economic conditions and social and cultural values that potentially enrich and restrict future development. Although isolation in the mountain region has restricted development of some economic opportunities, isolation has to some degree served as a protection from the ravages of over-development. Exploitation of natural resources often conflicts with the preservation of the scenic beauty that attracts other forms of economic development. Each group of newcomers to the region has brought new ideas, values and lifestyles, many of which conflict with those established earlier.

The evolving patterns of conflict between and assimilation of the generations of natives and newcomers has been a struggle for every generation in the region. To effectively manage this dynamic region, its citizens and leaders will have to understand and work with the physical, cultural and economic realities that have evolved in these magnificent mountains.

## What is Western North Carolina?

The eastern ridge of the Appalachian mountains, commonly known as the Blue Ridge, is usually considered the eastern boundary of western North Carolina. Although political boundaries of counties that border or are bisected by this ridge are frequently considered "mountain counties," those areas west of the Blue Ridge are more appropriately associated with traditional mountain people and culture. In recent years, however, state and federal programs have included some counties east of the Blue Ridge as part of western North Carolina.

In areas east of and adjacent to the Blue Ridge, "family and kin" have migrated in and out, blurring the distinction perceived to exist between those who live in the mountains and those who live "off the mountain."

This distinction, encompassing both social and cultural characterizations, remains in varying degrees a definition of the region.

### Isolation of the Early Years

With the exception of scattered trappers, traders and explorers, the mountains were the exclusive domain of the Cherokee Indians prior to the late 1700s. The first wave of Colonial and European settlers arrived in the mountains during the last quarter of the 18th century and continued to migrate there through the latter part of the 19th century. These Scotch, Irish, Celtic, English and German settlers accepted the physical, social and cultural isolation imposed by the mountains in order to acquire their own land.

Having little contact with the world beyond the Blue Ridge, the mountaineers became a self-reliant and insular people. Outside the extended family, the church, school and courthouse were focal points of community life. Poor access to and within the mountains limited communication with people and institutions outside the region. As a result, the rest of the state usually ignored the mountain region, and a tradition of benign neglect befell the mountain region and its people.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, there was a marked division in the sentiments of the region. Except in very isolated cases, the institution of slavery was not practiced in western North Carolina. Farms were small and the economics of slavery did not fit the system of subsistence farming practiced in the mountains. Although few battles were fought in the mountains, the tragic and painful division of community and family split the region. Nowhere in North Carolina was this division more acute than in the mountains. Many families with relatives living in the region during the mid-19th century share stories of families split by their allegiance to the Union or Confederate cause. Remnants of these divisions can be found in the region today.

### Traditional Economic Base

The mountain region historically has had an economy based on natural resources. The original settlers of the region, including Native Americans, relied on the land and forests for their existence. Although fertile soils do exist in river valleys and colluvial deposits at lower elevations, agricultural operations have been difficult because of the topography, the absence of large tracts of land with good soil and the shorter growing season imposed by the elevation.

Following traditions of the Native Americans, early settlers learned the medicinal values of the many native plants and herbs found in the region. Families often supplemented their income by gathering and selling native plants which were popular in this country and, as in the case of ginseng, highly valued as an aphrodisiac in

the Far East. These gatherers, known locally as "wildcrafters," continue to operate in parts of the region.

### Agriculture

Subsistence farming was the predominant economic activity in the early years of settlement. Farms produced a variety of crops and raised enough animals to sustain themselves. The production of cash crops generated income by utilizing adaptive plants and animals suited to the region's climate and constraints. Cabbage, potatoes, apples, Burley tobacco, beef cattle and sheep were widely sold products. Another staple crop of the region was corn. However, because of the difficulty in shipping large quantities of corn to other markets, many mountaineers used an ancient and well-known method of converting corn to its liquid essence and obtained a much higher price for a product that was much lighter, although not necessarily easier to transport. [see sidebar]

Since the 1960s, marijuana, another high value crop with a legal cloud has grown increasingly popular with some sectors of the population. Frequently grown in remote fields amidst other crops, the weed of Woodstock has in part, carried on the tradition of the mountain moonshiners. However, today's "revenueurs" employ high-tech methods of aircraft surveillance and aerial photography to locate and destroy this crop that fuels the underground economy.

Small farm operations have declined in the mountain region, following similar trends nationwide. Despite declining production of many crops, including Burley tobacco and livestock, several agricultural products are doing well.

The production of apples remains a significant part of Henderson County's economy. It ranks as the largest

### Agricultural Origins of Stock Car Racing

Transportation of corn transformed to liquid spirits (a.k.a. white lightning, mountain dew, moonshine) was the beginning of other economic activities in the region. The first was the sport of stock car racing. Because of some rather strict laws regulating the sale and transportation of this crop derivative produced in a "tax-free environment," those involved in its transportation and sale required fast cars to remain in business. On weekends after deliveries had been made, some of the boastful drivers would make claims about who could deliver the goods via the fastest car. The obvious outcome of these boasts was a race to resolve the claim. Races were considered a more acceptable endeavor in the eyes of the law and drew a loyal and growing number of fans. These races quickly moved into other areas of the South and developed into one of the largest spectator sports in the country.





*Ore Knob copper mine in Ashe County, c. 1960. This 1,000-foot-deep mine, operated between 1873-1883 and 1952-1962, was the state's largest producer of copper.*

apple-producing county east of the Mississippi River. Apples have been the primary agricultural product for several generations, although the techniques for producing apples have changed significantly since World War II. New varieties of trees have been introduced which are smaller, produce more apples, are more resistant to disease and mature in a shorter period of time. Although new technology has been incorporated in growing the crop, apple growers rely on migrant workers to pick the harvest each fall.

A second exception to the declining agricultural sector in western North Carolina is the production of Christmas trees and other ornamental nursery species. This agricultural activity has been expanding rapidly since the 1960s, particularly in Avery County. The Fraser Fir and the Norway Spruce, the most popular and marketable species of Christmas trees, are grown at elevations above 3,500 feet. Other species of evergreen trees, including White Pine and Hemlock, as well as many trees and shrubs used by nurseries for landscaping, are grown at lower elevations throughout the region. In Avery County, former croplands, pastures, woodlands, and in many cases, front and back yards have been converted to rows of trees over the past 20 years.

### Logging

An abundance of natural resources coupled with a shortage of labor, transportation and markets led to the region's development as an extraction-based economy. With plentiful wildlife and vast spruce, fir and mixed hardwood forests, the tanning and lumber industries developed in the early years. Logging operations before the railroads arrived were limited by the lack of equipment and primitive transportation systems. The railroad quickly provided access to the forests and opened the

region to national markets. By the early 1920s, most of the native growth timber had been cut. Most of the areas have had second growth forests of mixed hardwoods, white pine, hemlock and some spruce and fir restored to the ridges and valleys of the region. However, in places like the Shining Rock/Graveyard Fields section of Haywood County, the magnificent spruce, fir and hemlock forests that were cut and inadvertently burned never returned.

The availability of timber eventually spawned the development of the furniture industry in foothill communities east of the Blue Ridge. After years of abuse and poor logging practices, George Vanderbilt's forest management practices were adopted and the concept of managed public forest lands was initiated by the federal government.

### Mining

Mining of subsurface mineral resources was another extractive activity developed early in the mountain region, although it never achieved the notoriety or impact of coal mining in West Virginia and Kentucky. Western North Carolina has produced a variety of minerals, including iron ore at Cranberry in Avery County, copper ore at the Ore Knob site in Ashe County, large dimension marble in Cherokee County, talc in Cherokee and Madison Counties and mica throughout the region. All of these mines have ceased operation or suffered significant declines.

However, some of the minerals traditionally mined in the region are still in demand because of either continued need or changing uses. For example, mica was once an essential component in insulators and electronic equipment. Today, scrap mica, a by-product of kaolin and feldspar processing, is used in the manufacturing of sheetrock joint cement, paints and drilling mud. Quartz products from Mitchell County are now used in manufacturing micro-chips for computers. Feldspar and kaolin, also mined in Mitchell County, continue to be the raw materials for the ceramic, porcelain and glass industries. Building stone, used in the construction of homes and structures in western North Carolina for years, is now being mined, processed and exported to "stone-poor" areas like Florida and Louisiana.

Precious and semi-precious gems are found at a variety of locations in the region. Specimens of ruby, sapphire, aquamarine, emerald, amethyst and garnet have been found in various locations in the mountain region and in some of the adjacent counties. The two counties most frequently associated with these gems are Macon and Mitchell. While the mining of these gems has not had a significant economic impact, the mystique of

finding a valuable gemstone has moved from the mining industry to the tourism industry. Gem mining is now associated with attracting tourists to roadside operations where, for a per-bucket fee, anyone may attempt to find a precious stone.

## Health and Tourism

One of the first settlements of non-mountaineers in the region was the Flat Rock community in Henderson County in the early 19th century. These visitors were residents of Charleston and the surrounding low country of South Carolina who came to the mountains to escape the hot, malarial summers. During the 1800s, the mountain climate was promoted as having curative powers for many respiratory diseases.

Early in the 1900s another small resort town was established as a retreat for Lowcountry citizens escaping the hot summers. A popular story holds that two of the early founders of this community, Mr. Kelsey and Mr. Hutchinson, derived its location by placing two intersecting lines on a map of the eastern United States. The lines were drawn from Chicago to Savannah, Georgia and from New York City to New Orleans. The intersecting point was the location of Highlands, named for its 4,000-foot-plus elevation in the Blue Ridge mountains in southern Macon County.

Sanitoriums, inns, hotels and boarding houses became increasingly common in those parts of the region where access could be established and capital found to build and operate such an establishment. As word of the region's beauty and medicinal powers spread, tourists and people seeking less expensive land came in increasing numbers as the 19th century moved into its last quarter.

Water has played a primary role in the development patterns of the region. Although the region's rivers offered limited transportation, most of the early roads and the railroads were located along the rivers. The resort town of Hot Springs, located on the banks of the French Broad River in Madison County, derived its name from the more than 20 hot water springs. Discovered by two soldiers pursuing Indians in 1778, the town quickly developed into a health resort. By 1830 the construction of a series of grand hotels had begun. The first golf course in North Carolina is attributed to the town's Mountain Park Hotel. For almost a century tourists and health enthusiasts arrived by the Buncombe Turnpike and by rail to consume and bathe in the medicinal and 100° F. waters of the springs. However, by 1920, most of the hotels had burned and major floods had damaged the spring facilities.

The most significant event in the region during the 19th century was the coming of the railroad to the Asheville area in 1880. The railroad further opened this

once-closed society to the world. Within the next 20 years many areas of western North Carolina underwent dramatic changes as a result of the railroad's presence.

The railroad accelerated access to western North Carolina and its resources. Most of the region's large estates were developed during this period. The 125,000-acre Biltmore estate was acquired and developed by George Vanderbilt. The magnificent country estate house was designed by Richard Morris Hunt and completed in 1895. The grounds of the estate were planned and developed by Frederick Law Olmstead. After Vanderbilt's death his wife gave a large portion of the vast estate to the U.S. government. This donation was the foundation of the first National Forest which is today a large portion of the Pisgah National Forest. The Biltmore house and the remaining 8,000 acre estate, owned and managed by Vanderbilt's grandson, William A.V. Cecil, is one of the featured tourist destinations in the region.

Several North Carolina residents developed large estates and summer homes in the northwestern part of the mountain region between Grandfather Mountain and Blowing Rock. Hugh MacRae purchased a large tract which included Grandfather Mountain and the adjacent area he helped develop into Linville Resort. To the north and east of Grandfather Mountain, two prominent Greensboro businessmen, Julian Price and Caesar Cone, purchased large estates and built large summer homes. These family estates represented two of the larger summer places established in this section of the mountains. Both of these estates were later donated to the National Park Service as recreational facilities. Similarly, Hugh Morton, grandson of Hugh MacRae and current owner of the remaining large acreage of the Grandfather Mountain property, has donated almost 2,000 acres to the Nature Conservancy for permanent protection.

These large estates are best known because they have been preserved in large tracts and are accessible to some degree by the public. Other estates remain as only historic footnotes. One such estate was located in Graham County. George Moore from Chicago discovered this remote area and sought to establish a hunting preserve for use by his friends. A large tract was acquired and fenced, a hunting lodge was built, and pens were constructed to raise and hold many species of game animals from around the world. Russian Wild Boar, non-native species of bear, elk, antelope, buffalo and game birds were imported and stocked on the preserve. Difficulty in maintaining the estate, poaching and other factors led to the abandonment of the estate after several years. Few remnants of the estate remain, with the notable exception of the wild boar. The boar has adapted and bred with domestic stock to produce a prolific species that has spread to a wider range and is still hunted.

### Boom Years

The railroad's presence led to a new wave of interest and discovery in the mountain region. The 1920s roared into the mountain region on the rails and trails of speculative development occurring throughout the Southeast region, especially in the newly developing state of Florida. During the decade of the 1920s, communities with rail access flourished. Asheville, a small community of regional trade, health and tourist interests, grew from approximately 28,000 citizens to over 50,000 in a brief nine-year period. More impressive than the population growth during this period was the dramatic increase in property values. The rapid physical and economic growth occurring during these years did not reach every area but had a significant impact on those areas with access to rail and the expanding road system.

Remote rural areas did not share equitably in the prosperity and improvements brought to the towns and resorts during these years. Although Asheville was reported to be the second city in the world to have electric street cars, many rural areas in the mountains did not have electricity, public water or sewer. The division between the "haves" and "have-nots" in the mountains established itself along the lines of cities versus rural areas and newcomers versus natives. In this turn-of-the-century environment, Asheville's native son, writer Thomas Wolfe, often focused on this clash of lifestyles.

The expansion of resort and health facilities brought other visitors and residents to the mountains. In addition to Wolfe, writers F. Scott Fitzgerald and O. Henry (William Sidney Porter) had connections in Asheville. Noted politicians and industrialists, including William Jennings Bryan, Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone, frequented the area as guests, some purchasing property in the community. Skilled craftsmen and professionals, many originally drawn to Asheville to develop the Biltmore Estate, remained in the area, enriching the culture of the region. Others, like the young Walt Disney and Charlton Heston, worked here briefly before moving on to other places.

The influx of these newcomers and the rush of new technology and construction had much less impact on rural areas and citizens. Although markets for agricultural goods increased and new service jobs developed in the urban centers, rural conditions in the mountains lagged behind those in the cities and rural areas in other parts of the state.

### The Crash and Dormant Years

The economic depression of the 1930s that befell the entire country with the October 1929 stock market crash was preceded in western North Carolina by a natural disaster that occurred in Florida. In the late 1920s, a hurricane struck the coast of Florida and severely dam-

aged the properties of investors who also had developments in Asheville and other parts of western North Carolina. The resulting loss of capital to further speculative development in the mountain area softened the real estate market prior to the 1929 debacle on Wall Street.

Western North Carolina suffered with the nation during the thirties and early war years of the forties. Populations declined throughout the region as birth rates fell and people left the area in search of employment. Those called to serve in the war effort left for the service, and following the war many took jobs in other regions with better employment opportunities. The location of two major industrial operations during the expansion years, Champion Paper Mill and the Enka Fiber Mill, provided one of the few economic cushions during the region's hard years.

Although the war years brought hardships for families and the region, it did bring some rather unique opportunities. Because of its relatively isolated location (in the context of World War II geography), Asheville housed a communications center for the Weather Wing of the U.S. Army Air Force in the City Building. Many of the nation's art treasures were secretly moved from the National Gallery in Washington to the Biltmore House where they remained until after the war. The Veterans Hospital in Asheville, originally constructed as a tuberculosis sanatorium in the 1920s, was used as a recuperative hospital for injured veterans. For a brief period of time during the war, the presidential cottage at the Grove Park Inn was used as headquarters for the Philippine government in exile. The Grove Park Inn in Asheville served as a wartime internment facility for some special prisoners of war. Rumors still surface about German spies operating from a house on top of Asheville's Town Mountain.

### Post-War Years

The rapid expansion of the country's economy in the post-war years was fueled by several jump-start programs designed to bring the American Dream to the middle-class family returning to normal following the war. The house in the suburbs with the white picket fence, a new car, non-rationed gas, full pantries and lots of new babies were the goals of many returning GIs. The Federal Housing Administration and Veterans' Administration mortgage programs and the tremendous infusion of money into the highway program made the dream a reality for many.

Unfortunately, for most areas of western North Carolina the physical and political impediments of the past prevented participation in this boom. Both physical and political isolation from the rest of the state slowed and hindered the construction of roads and other transportation facilities in the mountain region. The political



power base of the state remained in the East and Piedmont. With the state's assumption of responsibility for the road systems and principal funding of the school systems, many of western North Carolina's needs were relegated to a lower priority. When state monies were allocated to the region, they could not go as far because the construction of roads and facilities in the mountains is more costly.

As a result of lack of funding and few improvements, the post-war economic boom reached the mountain region more slowly and with less impact than in the rest of the state. The same impediments to physical development also continued to hamper economic expansion. Lack of available flat land, coupled with inadequate utility systems, roads, rail and natural gas, continued to haunt business recruiters throughout the region. The mountain region suffered a loss of the labor force from its already low population base during the thirties and the forties, adding yet another strike against the area.

### A Region In Transition

During the 1960s a period of change began in the mountain region. The mountains were rediscovered as a vacation spot. The Blue Ridge Parkway, built in the 1930s by the CCC program, the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, acquired in 1940, and a resurgence of interest in other resorts including the Cherokee Reservation, Chimney Rock Park, the Biltmore House and Grandfather Mountain provided the base for the tourist market. Families were taking more vacations and had more money to spend.

The Federal Highway program, supplemented by the Appalachian Regional Commission's programs to provide roads, utilities and seed money for economic development, brought new four-lane highways to and through the mountains. Although the impact on recruiting new industry has not materialized to the extent some expected and many desired, the roads did provide greater accessibility for tourists and visitors.

Most of the tourist business had been based upon development and facilities established during the turn of the century. The 1960s brought the first new developments built by the private sector. Early leaders included Hugh Morton, developer of the Grandfather Mountain park featuring the mile-high swinging bridge and wildlife area, and the Robbins brothers, developers of Tweetsie Railroad. Their mountain theme park, located between Blowing Rock and Boone, incorporates a steam locomotive that had been used on a nearby railroad route abandoned 20 years earlier.

The mountains traditionally have been recognized as a summer resort known for mild days and cool nights. Additionally, a peak season had developed in October when the fall colors brought thousands of "leaf lookers" back to the mountains for several weeks. The first of November signified the season's end and a long, cold and economically bare time for many. With the advent in the 1960s of the technology and equipment to make man-made snow, the winter season for the mountain region began. From the mid 1960s to the early 1970s ski resorts developed as far south as north Georgia's Sky Valley, with the largest concentration of resorts in Avery and Watauga counties. In most circumstances the ski facilities were the drawing amenity for the sale of real estate associated with the resort. Some of these facilities, including Sugar Mountain, Beech Mountain, Hound Ears and Hawks Nest, also incorporated golf courses.

Physical and fiscal constraints limited the development of ski resorts. In the brief history of the ski facilities, all of the projects have suffered financial hardships, most resulting in some form of bankruptcy. The vagaries of weather, real estate markets and national economic trends have exacerbated financial problems in a business which operates on a marginal level.

With the increased amount of vacation travel occurring in the nation, western North Carolina was rediscovered by many older travelers who were at or near retirement age and were looking for a location that was environmentally (primarily climatically) better than where they were living. Western North Carolina became an attractive place for residents of the Northeast and Midwest who sought to escape the harsh winters of the "snow belt" and for residents of Florida who decided that they wanted to avoid the sultry heat of the tropical climate. This pattern was not new. However, improved



*Grandfather Mountain, a major tourist attraction, includes 2,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land managed by the Nature Conservancy.*

access to and within the region, a larger market of people with more money and the relatively low cost of land renewed interest in western North Carolina as a second home and retirement destination.

During the 1960s and '70s, developments catering to second-home and retirement markets were established throughout the region but predominantly along the "rim counties" of western North Carolina. These counties, including Polk, Henderson, Transylvania, Jackson and Macon, are located on the North Carolina-South Carolina border, closest to southern markets. These developments frequently incorporate a natural feature and/or a golf course in their marketing program.

While these counties have active tourism interests and second-home developments, rapid increases in population (especially in Henderson County) coupled with high per-capita income and median age statistics demonstrate the influx of permanent residents retiring to these communities. Other reliable measures of this hypothesis are gleaned from retirement-oriented publications in the 1980s that listed Hendersonville and Brevard as being among the best places to retire.

### Land-Use Planning

The region cannot be generalized to include a uniform mix of tourism, retirement and second-home development. However, these three segments of the service industry are the leading components of the economy. The intensity of tourist, resort and retirement development and marketing has increased dramatically since the mid-1960s. Lack of state or local land-use regulations have created physical problems affecting the fragile environment. In some cases roads and utilities have been inadequate to support development, straining local governments' services and facilities. In 1973 a Mountain Area Management Act was proposed to parallel the state's Coastal Area Management Act. This act was defeated and has lain dormant for almost 20 years. Public outcry over the construction of a ten-story condominium complex on Sugar Mountain in 1983 led to a state law regulating ridge-top development.

Interest in both a mountain and a statewide legislative planning initiative has resurfaced in recent years. Currently there are Legislative Study Commissions on both issues. The interest and emphasis on agriculture in Avery and Henderson counties, two counties where resorts, tourism and retirement communities compete with agriculture for valuable land, has resulted in the recent adoption of voluntary farmland preservation programs. Buncombe County, surrounding the City of Asheville, has also adopted a similar program. In these counties, as well as in all counties in the mountains, the agricultural community traditionally has not been receptive to the adoption of any land-use controls. However, in these three counties competition and pressure

to use land and the conflicts and nuisance suits resulting from the close proximity of intensive farming and new residential developments have encouraged many farmers to seek some level of protection.

While there remains a strong faction of natives opposed to land-use regulations, especially those imposed from the state level, there are an increasing number of western North Carolina citizens who recognize the need for some form of protection from uncontrolled development. A growing number of the region's native citizens sense an impending loss of not only the physical qualities of the mountain landscape, but also the social and cultural values and customs they treasure.

### Them and Us

As urbanization has intensified and more people from other areas have moved into mountain communities, a divisive "them and us" attitude has frequently resulted. Tourists, second home residents and retirees bring new and different values, frequently more income, and often a lack of knowledge and understanding of the people who originally settled in this region.

Change is occurring in western North Carolina at an increasing rate and will continue as more people discover the region. Some will discover it for its beauty, resources and liveability. Others will discover it because it will be seen as "easy pickings." The past holds that abuses in the region have come from those on the mountain as well as from those "off the mountain." However, the people of the region can manage the pace of change if they find common ground and a unity of purpose. If neither natives nor newcomers exercise leadership, management will be left to those who continue to extract value from the mountains for personal gain with little regard for long-term economic and cultural stability. Lack of responsible management in the mountains will result in significant and irreparable damage to the physical and economic health of the region.

Planning growth and development in western North Carolina will require that common goals, understandings and compromises be reached in each community. Individual plans will need to be developed, based upon the unique history, physical conditions and circumstances found in each community. The planning process in western North Carolina will need flexibility to accommodate the diversity inherent within the region, as well as economic and other incentives for participation. Conversely, penalties are needed for development that is not properly managed. However, flexibility does not mean the process should be avoided or delayed indefinitely. The detrimental impacts of unmanaged growth continue to accrue on a daily basis. Better solutions will be found in action taken on the basis of education and knowledge, not from reactions to emotions and self-interest. CP

# Strategic Planning for Regional Economic Development in Western North Carolina

---

**Bruce S. Boggs**

Community-based strategic planning is gaining wide acceptance in North Carolina. Communities large and small have used strategic planning principles to set priorities, focus their efforts and mobilize resources for community and economic development. The Regional Economic Strategy Project (RESP), undertaken by Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living, applied strategic planning methods in an effort to stimulate regional economic development in seventeen western North Carolina counties. The project received a 1989 *Project of the Year* award from the National Association of Management and Technical Assistance Centers (NAMTAC). In 1990, it won a second NAMTAC *Project of the Year* award for applied research conducted under the project's Business Capital Task Force. A third NAMTAC *Project of the Year* award was announced in 1992 for the Mountain Commercial Lending Consortium, an initiative that grew out of the RESP. In a report to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) cited the Regional Economic Strategy Project as an example of what CFED has called the new paradigm, or Third Wave, of economic development policy.

## **Background**

In 1987, the Economic Development Division of Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living began the Regional Economic Strategy Project to stimulate economic development initiatives in the seventeen westernmost counties of North Carolina. H.F. "Cotton" Robinson, former chancellor

of Western Carolina University, supplied much of the energy and vision for the project. Robinson, a native of western North Carolina, felt that the region's lagging economic performance fell far short of its potential. He was certain that substantial gains could be achieved if Western North Carolinians could unite around key development issues of regional significance. As chancellor, Robinson had established Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living in 1976 as a means of delivering technical assistance and other services to communities, groups and individuals throughout the region. Ten years later, in collaboration with the director of the Center's Economic Development Division and an economics professor, he began to articulate his vision for a regional economic development initiative.

In 1987, Robinson assembled an Advisory Panel and a Steering Committee. The Advisory Panel, which included state and nationally recognized leaders from the public and private sectors, reviewed and critiqued the project design. The Steering Committee, on the other hand, had a more participatory role in the project. Its members, which included regional leaders representing a wide range of organizations and institutions, endorsed the project outcomes.

Funds were secured from the Valley Resource Center of the Tennessee Valley Authority to underwrite the costs of planning the regional initiative. A community development professional was hired in December 1987 to design and direct the project. Early in 1988, the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center committed funds to implement the project. During the project's planning phase, the project director and the director of CIML's Economic Development Division met with a variety of leaders throughout the region to explain the intent of the project and to solicit insights that could help shape its design. Between January and May 1988,

---

*Bruce S. Boggs designed and directed the Regional Economic Strategy Project. He currently serves as an assistant director of the EDA University Center within the Economic Development Division of Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living.*



*Western Carolina University, home of the Center for Improving Mountain Living.*

the design of the project was refined continually. In addition, members of the Technical Committee were recruited from throughout the region. This group was comprised of 28 individuals with a broad range of expertise and experience. Its function was to identify and propose to the Steering Committee a manageable number of development issues to be addressed through the project. With this group in place, the project was launched in June 1988.

### **Project Design**

Strategic planning initiatives typically begin with an assessment of the environment within which planning decisions must be made. This process is referred to as an environmental scan, and it involves looking at trends and outside forces that impinge on community and economic development. The RESP used a participatory scanning technique intended to build a broad base of public engagement and support as it identified and selected key issues. Readers who are technically oriented may question the validity of an environmental scan that is not grounded in exhaustive expert analysis. In designing the RESP, however, the director judged that the success of the project would be determined more by broad consensus than by analytical rigor. The scan was therefore designed as a series of half-day public forums engaging citizens in the process of issue identification and selection.

Project staff, co-sponsored by local economic development organizations, chambers of commerce and regional councils of governments, convened five forums in the seventeen-county area. The forums included as few

as three counties, and as many as seven. They were open to the public, and invitations were sent to public officials and civic and business leaders. Attendance at the forums generally ranged from 50 to 150. Participants included civic leaders, educators, elected and appointed public officials and business people.

Each of the forums used the same agenda. Following a brief introduction of the RESP and its purpose, participants worked in groups of ten to fifteen to discuss each of four questions.

To get participants to articulate their vision for the region, the first question asked was: "What would be the characteristics of a well-developed western North Carolina economy?" Project staff intentionally avoided using the term 'economic development' because it tends to evoke narrow thinking about industrial recruitment and business development. The question succeeded in eliciting broad thinking about the region's economic future. Participants' comments, which included factors such

as economic opportunity, quality of life, educational opportunity and sound infrastructure, were recorded by facilitators and posted for reference throughout the remaining discussions.

Participants were then asked to consider, and to state their ideas concerning, changes and events that will affect the development of western North Carolina by the year 2000. The responses were recorded and ranked by participants. The next two questions asked participants to identify factors that favor and those that limit the kinds of development they want to see in the region. Again the ideas were recorded and ranked. Finally, participants reviewed the results of the previous discussions and considered regional efforts that should be taken to ensure the kind of future that had been described at the beginning of the forum.

After the final forum was held on August 25, 1988, the results of all the forums were synthesized. The next stage of analysis began with the specific recommendations recorded at the end of each forum. The recommendations were summarized, and similar ones were consolidated. The resulting list of 30 "strategic options" was presented to the project's Technical Committee for further analysis. These options were more specific than issue statements in that they included general prescriptions for action to be taken.

The Technical Committee members drew on their own expertise and insight in analyzing the strategic options. They considered both the developmental impact of each option and the feasibility of achieving results within a two-year period, and plotted the results of their analysis on an evaluation matrix. Project staff

### **Strategic Objectives Adopted by the Regional Economic Strategy Project**

#### *Immediate Objectives:*

- Improve the availability of business capital.
- Reduce solid waste and improve solid waste management.
- Enhance the contribution of tourism and recreation to the economy.
- Develop the region's leadership resources.

#### *Secondary Objectives:*

- Improve the region's transportation systems, with emphasis on strategic highways.
- Provide for conservation of Western North Carolina's land resources through the establishment of a method of growth management.
- Increase public support for continuing improvement of education in the public schools.
- Strengthen the region's institutional capacity to produce a workforce prepared for technical careers.
- Improve the education and skill levels of the region's present workforce.

synthesized the matrices before the meeting at which the Technical Committee made the final selection of options to be addressed by the RESP. This comprehensive evaluation of strategic options was not intended to determine the final decision of the Technical Committee. Instead this process was to help focus the discussion on those options with the highest impact and feasibility. At its decision meeting, the Technical Committee discussed the aggregate results, and had the opportunity to negotiate adjustments. This negotiation process allowed members with expertise or insight on a particular issue to challenge the group assessment of impact or feasibility, and to argue for an adjustment. If the group reached consensus that an option should be moved on the matrix, it was moved.

Through its process of discussion and negotiation, the Technical Committee reached consensus on four objectives to be addressed initially by the RESP. Five secondary objectives were selected in addition to these immediate objectives. [see box] The secondary objectives were seen as critically important but less feasible than the immediate objectives. The immediate and secondary objectives were presented to the RESP Steering Committee in October 1988. The Steering Committee adopted the objectives and appointed co-chairs for each of the four immediate objectives. The co-chairs were individuals from various communities within the region

who had expertise and leadership stature related to their respective objectives. The co-chairs had the responsibility to organize regional task forces and to lead those groups in the design of regional strategies to achieve their objectives. The task force members were recruited during the first three months of 1989.

### **Business Capital Task Force**

Economic developers in western North Carolina and throughout the rural South have relied heavily on industrial recruiting for creating jobs. This is still an important development strategy, but only a partial solution. Stimulating the formation of new business and the growth of established ones is part of a well-balanced economic development program. Such a strategy necessarily focuses on small business. Most new businesses start out small, and the majority of the firms already operating in the region are small.

The relative abundance of small business and self-employment in the region indicate fertile ground for stimulating business formation and growth. However, obtaining equity and debt capital is difficult, limiting efforts to stimulate business. Recognizing this gap in the capital market, many of participants in the forums recommended a regional revolving loan fund to finance small business development.

The RESP Business Capital Task Force was organized to design a strategy to improve the availability of capital to finance small business start-up and expansion. The Task Force had 36 members, representing a variety of institutions and organizations. The group included small business owners, economic development professionals, lenders, utility representatives, providers of business assistance and staff of state economic development agencies.

The Task Force began by developing an understanding of the problem of business development finance in western North Carolina. All members of the group had insights into the problem, but a clear consensus did not exist within the group about the nature of the problem or its solution. To build this consensus, the Task Force began its work with a couple of panel presentations designed to share perspectives and stimulate some organized discussion of critical issues. The first panel included economic development professionals and providers of business assistance who served on the Task Force. The second panel included Task Force members who own and operate small businesses in western North Carolina. These panel discussions revealed some of the difficulties of small business development. However, they also demonstrated to the Task Force that a more systematic analysis would be required to provide the group with the information needed to understand and solve the problems of business development finance. More information was needed about both the nature



and the extent of unmet demand for business capital than could be provided by anecdotal data.

To gather the needed information, the Task Force asked lenders represented on the Task Force to participate in what came to be called the *Deal Stream Analysis*. This study measured the volume and nature of the "nonbankable" loan requests. RESP staff designed the analysis in collaboration with the lenders on the Task Force. A one-page form was used to collect specified information on each small business loan request that was denied during the three-month study period (November 1989 - January 1990). For the purposes of this analysis, small businesses were defined as those with annual sales of two million dollars or less.

During the three-month period, data were collected on 158 small business loan requests made at the six participating lending institutions. From the results of the *Deal Stream Analysis*, the Task Force concluded that intervention in the business formation and development process clearly was justified. The group was particularly impressed with the finding that in this one quarter, \$32 million in potential loan requests were denied. Since the data were collected during a quarter that is typically a slow business period, it is reasonable to estimate that there is more than \$130 million in unmet small business loan demand over the period of a year. Some lenders on the Task Force noted that even half this figure would represent a substantial amount of potential development.

The *Deal Stream Analysis* and the preceding panel discussions also made it clear to the Task Force that obstacles other than the availability of capital also constrained business formation and development. On June 27, 1990, the Task Force adopted a strategy to address a broader range of constraints. The strategy included three program components, the first of which was the development of improved educational programs to strengthen small business owners' capabilities in the areas of financial management and business planning. Institutional factors that are in the process of being resolved have held up the implementation of this strategy. The Small Business and Technology Development Center, part of the University of North Carolina system, and the Small Business Centers, based in the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges, are working to differentiate and articulate their responsibilities and functions. These negotiations are expected to be completed during 1992, after which work will resume on developing the types of training programs called for by the task force.

A second component called for development of the role of banks as points of entry into the business formation and development system, rather than simply serving as depositories for, and allocators of, capital. As points of entry into the business formation and development system, banks would connect unsuccessful loan appli-

cants with a technical assistance provider when appropriate. Considerable progress has been made on this strategy. The Small Business and Technology Development Center has adopted a program of routinely calling on local bankers to increase and maintain their familiarity with technical assistance services available to small businesses. As a result, the SBTDC reports a significant increase in the number of small business clients referred to them by lending institutions. The SBTDC is also planning a series of lenders' conferences to familiarize local loan officers with services available through the SBTDC.

The third component called for the establishment of a high-risk loan fund to finance businesses that cannot meet conventional underwriting criteria. The task force asked Smoky Mountain Development Corporation, a SBA-sanctioned certified development company, to take the lead role in putting the lending program together. The initial concept was that banks, and perhaps utilities, would contribute to a free-standing loan pool managed by Smoky Mountain Development Corporation. The banks, however, indicated during discussions that they would prefer lending directly to the businesses. The banks could commit more resources to a direct lending program than they could contribute to an independent fund. In response to this preference, staff at Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living designed a consortium through which banks lend directly to small businesses on a rotation basis. The Mountain Commercial Lending Consortium was established in July 1992, with eight banks jointly committing to lend \$1 million through the program, in a 21-county area. Smoky Mountain Development Corporation is packaging the loans and will closely monitor performance of the borrowers. Loans are expected to average \$50,000, with a range of \$20,000 to \$150,000.

### Solid Waste Task Force

The public forums revealed broad concerns among citizens about the adequacy of the region's infrastructure. The most urgent concern had to do with our capacity to manage solid waste. In western North Carolina, the traditional method of managing solid waste has been to bury it in the ground. But growing concern about protecting groundwater quality has led to changes in landfill regulations. New requirements would dramatically increase the cost of landfill construction and operation. Many landfills in this region were nearing their capacity, a problem compounded by relatively strong population growth.

As the cost of solid waste management escalates, it would increasingly compete with other functions and services for public dollars. The new sanitary landfills would be too expensive to fill with wastes that do not require advanced sanitary disposal or that could be

reused or recycled. Toxic wastes must be kept out to avoid expensive treatment of landfill leachate. Some forum participants felt that problems associated with solid waste management could severely limit economic development. Many recommended regional action to address this problem.

The Solid Waste Management Task Force was charged with creating a regional strategy to reduce solid waste and improve solid waste management. The Task Force had 30 members, including local public officials, staff of regional councils and representatives of private industry, public interest organizations and several public agencies.

Through a series of discussions, the Task Force determined that the lack of developed markets for recyclable materials was one of the most pressing waste-management problems in this region. In collaboration with Regional Councils A, B, C and D, the Task Force explored ways to encourage a regional approach to the development of market infrastructure, and designed a strategy to improve the market for recyclable materials in the region. The strategy called for the establishment of a regional material recovery and marketing system that would consolidate the marketing power of small rural communities.

Under the direction of the task force, staff of the Center for Improving Mountain Living designed a project and secured funding from the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center and the North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources. Two additional councils of governments (serving regions E and I) joined the effort, expanding the project region to include 31 counties. The Appalachian Regional Commission, which routinely funds projects of regional councils, provided additional funding to support the councils' participation in the project.

The strategy initially proposed involved the development of a regional material recovery and marketing

system that would aggregate the selling power of local recycling programs through regionally-coordinated marketing services. This proposed system would not physically agglomerate materials from 31 counties in one place for delivery to buyers. Instead it would manage the marketing and delivery of the materials, which might be delivered to one buyer in several separate shipments. The proposed system would initially handle two materials, and additional materials would be added as feasible.

The project team, composed of one staff representative from each of the six councils of governments and a project coordinator from CIML, explored the feasibility of a quasi-public material recovery and marketing system that would represent an association or cooperative of local governments. The team also explored the feasibility of a marketing cooperative of private recycling companies. For a variety of reasons both of these approaches were found to be unworkable. A more feasible arrangement was the development of material processing and marketing systems in the private sector, with numerous subregional market areas for processing and marketing services.

Although this system had already begun to develop through the initiative of several private companies, the project team observed that a couple of factors controlled by the public sector are critical to the successful development of private sector material recovery and marketing capacity. The first is an adequate and dependable supply of material that meets market-quality standards. The other factor is mitigation of the risks, such as dramatic price fluctuations, inherent in private material recovery and marketing enterprises.

The project team directed its efforts to the publicly-controlled factors critical to the development of a private sector system. The project team facilitated the development of improved material collection systems to ensure a dependable supply of material. In some cases, this work involved assistance to local governments in the examination and formation of multi-county systems. In other cases it involved exchange of information among counties that allowed them to learn from the experience of others further along in developing their own recycling systems. Near the end of the project period, this mechanism for exchanging information and experience was expanded statewide when the councils of governments participating in the project organized an informal network of their peers to meet quarterly with state agency representatives to discuss current policy and program issues in solid waste management.

The project also developed relationships between the public and private sectors. Contacts between local governments or groups of



*Hot Springs, NC was a thriving spa in the late 19th century. Hot Springs was the first community chosen for RESP's tourism development project.*

local governments and private recycling companies were arranged to discuss potential service options and conditions. Project team members did not engage directly in negotiations between governments and private companies, but they provided information and helped local governments analyze options. By the end of the project, all 31 counties in the project region had access to markets for at least two recyclable materials, and most were marketing five or more materials. The most commonly marketed materials are aluminum, glass, plastics, paper and cardboard.

### **Tourism Development Task Force**

As employment growth slows or declines in the industrial sectors that have traditionally dominated the region's economy, the tourism industry has been promoted as a stabilizing force or possibly even as an engine for future economic growth and development. Communities in western North Carolina are increasingly drawn to economic development strategies that focus on opportunities in tourism.

The RESP Tourism and Recreation Task Force was charged with designing a strategy to build on western North Carolina's scenic beauty and recreational opportunities in an effort to enhance the contribution of tourism and recreation to the region's economy. The Task Force included: operators of tourism-related businesses; representatives of tourism promotion organizations, public resource management and planning agencies, and organizations interested in natural resource management; university faculty; and state legislators.

From the outset, the members of the Task Force acknowledged the many existing efforts to promote western North Carolina as a tourist destination. The group also recognized that far less effort was being invested in developing, improving and protecting the region's tourism product (i.e., attractions, amenities and infrastructure). The Task Force therefore decided to concentrate on development efforts rather than promotion efforts. The Task Force defined tourism product development to include product improvement as well as establishment of new product. It emphasized the importance of protecting against haphazard or inappropriate development.

After a year of study and discussion, the Task Force tentatively adopted an initiative to analyze the region's tourism and recreation resources and markets and to identify strategic product-development opportunities for western North Carolina. The goals of the initiative were as follows:

- to enhance the western North Carolina region as a tourist destination by protecting the environment and other tourism resources from degradation or depletion;

- to stimulate the region's economy through the development of new tourism and recreation attractions and support services and infrastructure as well as through improvements to existing tourism and recreation product;
- to deepen understanding of the existing tourism markets for western North Carolina and determine ways to expand market opportunities;
- to increase visitor satisfaction and encourage repeat visitation; and
- to better integrate tourism into community life and local economies.

Prior to developing a detailed methodology for the initiative, the Task Force presented the proposal to independent reviewers in an effort to gauge support for, and feasibility of, the initiative. Included in the group reviewing the proposal were: a chamber of commerce executive; two executive officers of the Cherokee Historical Association; the executive vice president of the Biltmore Company; a county planner; the executive director of a multi-county tourism-promotion organization; the executive director of a county economic development commission; a senior regional planner with the North Carolina Department of Economic and Community Development; the principal owner and a senior officer of one of the region's major outdoor attractions; and the owner and developer of two of the area's larger resorts.

The reviewers concluded that a tightly-focused initiative concentrating on product development at the local level, but with a regional perspective, would have greater potential for success than a regionwide undertaking. All of the reviewers recognized the value of a regionwide initiative; however, they also pointed out the enormous cost and time required to complete a full-fledged regional analysis of tourism and recreation resources and markets. Furthermore, there was some concern that substantial resources would be invested in analysis of areas where there was insufficient local interest. Consequently, the initiative was modified to concentrate on a small number of locations in which leadership and interest were evident.

The modified project was designed to: (1) develop and demonstrate a participatory decision-making model for communities considering tourism and recreation development as an economic development strategy; and (2) develop an information base and institutional capacity within the region to assist communities and clusters of communities in their product development efforts.

The strategy involved selecting two demonstration communities, and drawing on strategic planning principles to analyze market opportunities and develop tourism attractions or infrastructure. Unlike the other

three strategies, which were implemented by the Center for Improving Mountain Living, the Division of Community Assistance of the NC Department of Economic and Community Development implemented the tourism development strategy. They were supported by a project team that included representatives of a variety of public agencies with interests in tourism or natural resource development.

One of the communities selected for the demonstration project was Hot Springs, a very small town that straddles the Appalachian Trail. In addition to the Trail, the town is a base for several white-water rafting companies, and is the site of an historic resort and spa built around the geothermal springs for which the town is named. The project in Hot Springs was designed to build on these assets to make the town a more significant tourist destination. However, a fundamental change of personnel on the town board of aldermen brought to power a group that opposed further tourism development. The aldermen dismantled the planning board, which was coordinating the local tourism development efforts, bringing the project to a halt. Tourism development will continue in Hot Springs, driven by private interests who have already invested in the community. However, development will not be as well-coordinated and probably will not be as well-integrated into the rest of the local economy.

The second demonstration site is McDowell County, a community east of Asheville known more as a manufacturing center than as a tourist destination. The county has identified Lake James State Park as its primary tourism asset. As is typical of North Carolina state parks, there is relatively little development on Lake James. Leaders in McDowell County are examining other lake destinations to gain ideas for the development of a resort at the lake. The work in McDowell County does have the potential to serve as a model of community-based tourism development.

### Leadership Development Task Force

The issue of leadership emerged frequently during the forums, primarily in discussion of strategic actions to be taken in the region. As people confronted the complex issues facing the region they ran headlong into the question: "Where will the leadership come from for dealing with these important issues?" Recognizing that it must be supplied by the people of western North Carolina, many suggested a regional program to further develop the region's leadership resources.

Western North Carolina has a strong tradition of leadership. Significant accomplishments have been achieved through the efforts of local and regional leaders who recognized a challenge or opportunity and acted on it. This tradition has furthered economic development in the region, but substantial leadership

resources are still not being used. Throughout western North Carolina, there are potential leaders with insight and energy--untapped resources that could help solve local and regional problems in rapidly changing times.

The forums produced numerous recommendations for an action-oriented regional leadership development program. The Technical Committee and the Steering Committee agreed that such a program could build a stronger "civic infrastructure," enhancing the region's capacity to address other substantive issues. The Steering Committee called for a fourth task force to design a strategy for developing leadership resources. This Task Force had 27 members, a diverse group who are actively involved in local and regional civic affairs. Some were elected officials, others were on the staff of regional organizations, and others served on voluntary boards.

The Leadership Development Task Force heard presentations from two experts in leadership development, and had several meetings to discuss the necessary functions of and design criteria for a leadership development program. The Task Force was particularly committed to the concepts of economic development leadership and regionalism. The members wanted a program that would build the region's capacity to solve economic development problems. After six meetings, the group recommended that an implementation committee be established to refine the program design and to institutionalize it.

The Implementation Committee further developed the design of the leadership development program and asked Western Carolina University to administer it. The University agreed, and in September 1991, the pilot cycle of the Western Carolina Leadership Development Program was launched, in partnership with the North



*1992 Class of the Western North Carolina Leadership Development Program.*

Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, the Tennessee Valley Authority and MDC, Inc.. The initial class of 40 emerging leaders represented all seventeen of the target counties. It included elected officials, business owners and managers, nonprofit executives and managers, educators and bankers. It reflected the diversity of the region in terms of gender and race.

The program prepares emerging civic leaders to be effective players in regional economic development. During the program, participants apply the methods and information they learn by designing and implementing an actual regional development project. The class of the pilot cycle of the program selected two project issues, and two subgroups were established to work on them. Although the class graduated in August 1992, most of the members have remained involved in the implementation of their projects.

One group has designed and will implement a strategy to increase citizen understanding of the region's workforce development needs and problems, and to increase citizen involvement in addressing them. The group will commission a report designed to present a "citizens' view" of workforce development issues and their significance to the region's economic future. The report will describe current workforce development efforts in the region and will explain how citizens can strengthen these efforts or fill in strategic gaps. The release of the report will be followed by a series of public forums designed to spark greater levels of community activity around workforce development issues.

The other group of participants has established a strategy to improve performance (e.g., job growth, profitability, start-up rates, business growth rates and sustainment rates) of small businesses in western North Carolina. This strategy involves developing and implementing seminars to inform lenders, CPAs, attorneys and local business and economic development groups about available business assistance services and resources (training, technical assistance and special financing programs). Historically, these resources have been used mainly by individuals considering establishing a business. The strategy is intended to increase the use of assistance resources by more established businesses. Despite the fact that these technical and financial resources can substantially benefit established businesses, they rarely use them. This strategy will complement and reinforce the strategies developed by the RESP Business Capital Task Force.

## Conclusion

The Regional Economic Strategy Project has not been a quick-fix approach to regional development. The project was launched in early 1988, and the first regional strategy was initiated in September 1990. The pilot cycle of the leadership development program was completed

in July 1992, and that same month eight banks committed one million dollars to the Mountain Commercial Lending Consortium. The RESP has borne fruit, but the process took longer than initially anticipated. It will be several more years before any of the programs can be considered sufficiently mature to evaluate. The leadership program has graduated only its first class of participants, and their performance as regional economic development leaders must be tested over the next several years. The lending consortium will likely make its first loan in early 1993. Its effectiveness as a business formation and development strategy will become clear only after several years of lending.

When the RESP was initially designed, it was anticipated that the project would be a catalyst for regional intervention. The resulting strategies were to be spun off for implementation by organizations other than the Center for Improving Mountain Living. In fact, all but one of the four resulting initiatives were implemented through the Center. Through its staff support of the task forces, the Center became quite familiar with the strategies and developed credibility among key regional players, making it uniquely suited to implement the strategies. Furthermore, through the course of the project, the Center became increasingly committed to ensuring that the strategies were carried out.

Providing staff for the design of four regional development strategies, and the implementation of three, has been extremely demanding. In hindsight, it would have been prudent to limit the number of strategies selected to two, or perhaps three. Any organization contemplating a project like the Regional Economic Strategy Project should be prepared to commit substantial resources over a long period. The RESP occupied two full-time professional staff and considerable support staff. A third full-time professional was hired to coordinate the solid waste project. Other professional staff at CIML have also committed significant amounts of time to assist with strategy implementation.

CIML has no plans for another round of the Regional Economic Strategy Project. However, the process of designing and initiating regional development strategies has not been abandoned. Indeed the process is continuing through the Western Carolina Leadership Development Program, which can be considered the second generation of the RESP. The leadership development program has the capacity to produce strategies similar to those produced by the RESP; pilot cycle participants have already designed a strategy that may address all three of the workforce objectives that were on the secondary list of the RESP. Because the participants in the leadership program are given training in strategic analysis and planning, they will be able to take on the tough issues facing the region in the future. CP



# The MAY Coalition: Innovators in Economic Development and Job Creation

---

William Weeks

**M**itchell, Avery and Yancey Counties can be found in North Carolina's claim on Appalachia. Their beauty is exquisite, boasting the highest peaks east of the Mississippi including Mount Mitchell, the Roan and Grandfather Mountain. The Blue Ridge Parkway and the Continental Divide define the region's eastern border and the Appalachian Trail winds in and out of Tennessee along the western border. It's a land of clear, cold trout streams where woods entangled in mountain laurel and rhododendron open to reveal spectacular mountain vistas. Its cooler climate attracts Floridians in the summer, skiers in the winter and leaf enthusiasts in the fall.

The area's unsurpassed beauty is its greatest asset, but this splendor has created a number of ironies for the people who have traditionally called this place home. One such paradox is the contrast between the old wealth of summer residents in communities like Linville and Grandfather Mountain and generations-old poverty in neighboring communities. Conflicting interests arise between these two groups on issues such as how tax money should be spent and where industry should locate. The same mountains and geographical isolation that fostered independence also discouraged industrial development.

Traditionally, the people here depended on the area's natural resources to provide subsistence. Homesteaders built their own log houses, raised corn, potatoes, hogs and chickens. In order to buy the coffee they could not raise and the nails they could not make, they would either grow tobacco for a cash crop or sell timber off their land. Rich deposits of feldspar and mica brought a

mining industry that is still important today. The 1950's brought furniture and textile manufacturing that capitalized on low wages and a conscientious labor force grateful for employment. In the early 1980's, two Outboard Marine Corporation plants added a much needed boost to the local economy. It seems now, however, that the days of the "big buffalo hunt" are over and it's time to look toward small business for future development.

## The Process

In 1990, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation challenged each of the State's one hundred counties to submit a proposal for a project that would enable people to "move from poverty to a new quality of life." Z. Smith Reynolds called the initiative the "Opportunities for Families Fund" and promised to fund as many as five projects in North Carolina, for up to \$1,000,000 each. In the first round of funding, the Foundation offered sixteen planning grants of \$20,000 each. This bold move by the Foundation was so enticing that almost every county in the state examined how they could improve service delivery and what opportunities they could offer to their low-income population. In the end, the Foundation received eighty-six proposals for planning grants.

Susan Larson, a resource developer at Mayland Community College, proposed a coalition of the three mountain counties to make a single application. Although political rivalry among the three counties dates to the Civil War, necessity has led the counties to cooperate on large projects. The landfill, the hospital, the health district and the community college are all projects that have been shared by at least two of the counties. Because the three-county community college was involved, Larson was able to pull the three counties together once again. After community meetings and gaining approval from the three counties' governments, Larson submitted a planning grant proposal to Z. Smith

---

*William Weeks is director of the MAY Coalition and coordinated the Coalition's proposal to Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Mr. Weeks is a free-lance grantswriter. He lives with his wife and two children in the mountains of Western North Carolina.*



*The MAY Region boasts the highest peaks east of the Rockies.*

Reynolds that called for economic development through a co-operative or worker-owned approach. The other eighty-five proposals called for streamlining services or community organizing, but no others addressed poverty through economic development. The MAY Coalition became one of the "sweet sixteen" to receive the \$20,000 planning grant.

In January 1991, a coordinator was hired to guide the research, development and writing of the proposal. In order to hear directly from those receiving public assistance, three research assistants were hired to work with the low-income community. Each of the assistants was struggling herself. All received some sort of assistance from the state, but each one was in her own way trying to create a better life for her family. Additionally, a steering committee was formed to keep the project on course. It was composed of the Department of Social Services Director from each county, the three county managers, the three research assistants, the project's coordinator, the college's Human Resources Development director and Larson.

From there, the project took on a life of its own. The research assistants dived into the low-income communities to set up community meetings in each of the three counties. Meetings were held in housing projects and community centers. Other low-income residents volunteered to participate in issue-oriented task forces. The six task forces were: housing, child care, transportation, education, employment and health. Each task force involved both providers and consumers in the development of recommendations to include in the proposal to Z. Smith Reynolds. Representatives from each task force came together at a retreat where these ideas were distilled and forged into a viable plan to address the needs of this region's low-income population.

Concurrently, the three research assistants were conducting interviews with members of the low-income community. Every Food Stamp recipient in the three counties was given a chance to be interviewed. Eighteen hundred post cards were mailed to Food Stamp recipients asking whether they would be willing to be interviewed regarding this project. Of those, eighty responded yes and were interviewed. Fifty-eight more--mostly residents of the housing projects and neighbors of the research assistants--were interviewed. Of the one hundred thirty-eight people who were interviewed, 92 percent indicated they "want to go to work." Overwhelmingly, the main problem cited by those interviewed was the lack of decent jobs.

The needs assessment was extensive--six task forces with eight to ten providers and consumers meeting four or five times each, one hundred thirty-eight individual interviews with low-income residents and three research assistants organizing meetings with low-income residents. It was an impressive investigation, and all indicators pointed in the same direction: "we have minimum wage jobs and we have seasonal jobs, but we need more full-time jobs that pay fair wages and provide access to health insurance." [see sidebar below]

### **Anna's Plight**

Anna stood in line at the check-out counter with a cart full of groceries and her toddler who was pointing at the strategically displayed candy bars. She had paid a friend twelve dollars to drive her to a supermarket thirty miles from her home. There Anna could shop without her neighbors seeing that she paid with Food Stamps.

For three years now, ever since her husband left home, Anna has been one of the more than 236,000 Food Stamp recipients in North Carolina. She wanted a job but she knew that she could not support herself and her two children on the income she could earn. Anna had totaled the value of her benefits--AFDC, Food Stamps, child care, housing subsidy, and Medicaid. That total came to over \$12,000. Without a high school diploma, Anna knew that if she went to work she would have to settle for a minimum-wage job. If she took that job, worked forty hours per week for fifty-two weeks, and never took a vacation she could gross about \$8,800. She also knew she would lose many of her benefits.

Anna's dilemma is not unique. Many North Carolinians face what Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation has called "warring incentives." The problem is that people like Anna can have a better standard of living with more disposable income by maintaining eligibility for public assistance than they can have by going to work at a minimum-wage job.



"We have minimum-wage jobs..."

### The Proposal

Using the information gleaned from the research and maintaining a respect for the history and geographic limits of the area, the task was to put together a proposal that was realistic, while meeting the needs of the area's low-income population and finding favor with Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. The initial concept had been to begin a new industry, hire people who had been unemployed, manage the industry until it showed a profit, sell the company to the workers and then start the process over again. Profits from the company would go to workers' pay checks rather than to stock holders. Instead of a personnel director, the company would have a services coordinator who would help employees overcome what Z. Smith Reynolds had termed "barriers to employment." This person would work with people who had problems with transportation, child care or housing, and would work with families to accomplish educational goals.

This idea scared the hell out of the Foundation staff. They suggested that the MAY Coalition look to the private sector as an employer. After all, what do a bunch of social workers and educators know about turning an idea into a successful business enterprise? The MAY Coalition jumped on the idea. "Yeah, take the talent that already exists, give it a way and a financial incentive to expand, instill some social consciousness..." The initial idea was sound, but it needed refinement.

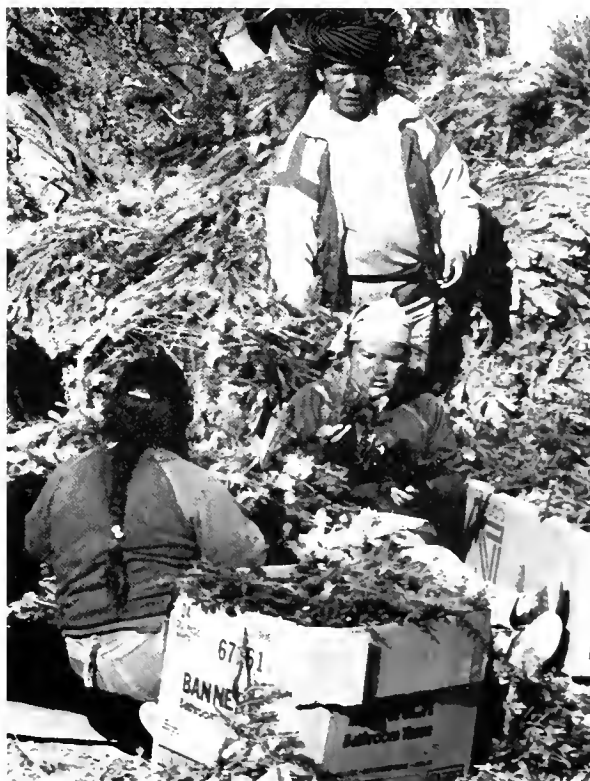
Rewriting of the proposal was frantic, but even after the idea was refined, it still made sense. The Board of Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation liked the proposal's community involvement, its innovativeness, its simplicity, its ability to be replicated and its boldness. The Foundation Board overcame their concern regarding the proposal's risky nature and awarded the MAY Coalition a grant of \$1,000,000.

### The Project

The MAY Coalition will make loans available to emerging or expanding businesses at an extremely low rate of interest if the business will agree to certain conditions. Those conditions read like any fair-minded employer's list: hire people who are unemployed, pay them no less than 130 percent of minimum wage, provide full-time non-seasonal employment, allow a reasonable amount of time at the job site for the MAY Coalition to provide either counseling or education and address the provision of health insurance for employees. Qualifying loan applicants that agree to these conditions can receive loans for up to five years at a fixed rate of interest equal to the prime rate at the time of the loan. MAY

Coalition will create fifty of these high quality job opportunities over five years. Loan amounts are determined by the number of jobs that will result from a loan.

The MAY Coalition's approach is unique in that the program is completely voluntary, for both the businesses and the people who become employed. The program's appeal to businesses is that credit is available and it is cheap. The program attracts people who are unemployed because the jobs will offer greater opportunity than the part-time and seasonal minimum-wage jobs currently available. For government officials, the pro-



"...and we have seasonal jobs."

gram offers increased economic development and reduced dependence on public assistance. According to Sandy Davis, the MAY Coalition's Chairwoman, "All parties win. If we are wise about who gets the loans, the fund should be able to help create ten jobs a year from now on. That will make a significant contribution to our local economy."

It's likely that people entering the labor force for the first time or reentering the labor force after having raised a family will have problems making the transition into the world of work. The MAY Coalition will counsel these employees in an effort to help them overcome any barriers that may have kept them from going to work before. Transportation, child care and health insurance will become a part of each employee's plan. Existing services will be coordinated with help from the three counties' Departments of Social Services. Mayland Community College has offered to provide continuing education to both employees and business owners. Many of the services needed are already existing. The MAY Coalition will attempt to use these services to encourage independence.

Because the project is innovative, there are issues that can only be answered when they arise. How will the loans be received by the business community? How will those who are unemployed feel about accepting a job offer? How will the MAY Coalition ensure fairness regarding the treatment of employees? Will employees want to accept educational opportunities? How will the MAY Coalition's Board deal with a business that runs behind in its payments? Will the MAY Coalition be able to maintain a ratio of loan value to number of jobs created that will cause fifty new jobs to be created over five years?

Many of these questions will be answered in the MAY Coalition's first full year of operation. Once the questions are answered and the MAY Coalition begins to experience success, it will be time to spread the word. Any community, rural or urban, could adopt or alter the MAY Coalition's concept. There are non-profit loan funds that could dedicate a portion of their fund to a similar purpose.



*Extreme wealth clashes with extreme poverty throughout the region.*

The MAY Coalition's Board of Directors is perhaps its greatest asset. The steering committee that guided the initial proposal also determined the composition of the Board. Each county government has one representative on the Board. From one county is a commissioner, from another is a county manager and from the third is the Department of Social Services director. The community college has one representative. There are five representatives from the business community: a plant manager, an insurance agent, an entrepreneur, a personnel director and a banker. There are also four seats on the Board reserved for people who become employed as a result of the MAY Coalition's efforts. The board is politically neutral, balanced across the three counties and weighted in favor of the private sector. It's an unlikely confederacy that commands wisdom in business matters, fairness in decision making and concern for others.

As this article goes to press, the MAY Coalition is on the verge of making its first loan. With a proven track record, the MAY Coalition plans to take its show on the road to share with other communities. The MAY Coalition does not plan to reform the nation's welfare system, but it does plan to shine a light on one, as yet, untraveled path. CP

# Managing Western North Carolina's National Forests

---

Walton R. Smith

**O**K, you guys, load on the truck and let's head for Stump Branch. Be sure that your axes are sharp and in the box, that you have your lunch from the mess hall, and that you are ready for a long day's work in 30 degree weather. Jim, do you have the first aid kit? Let's go!"

The date is January 10, 1935. The place is Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp No. 1, Mountain Rest, South Carolina on the Nantahala National Forest which extends from North Carolina into South Carolina and northern Georgia. The forestry foreman is me, and I quote from my diary, "Had 17 men, covered 52 acres of Timber Stand Improvement (TSI), took 7 1/2 hours to finish, worked around waterfalls--very pretty; some white pine. Released 18 crop trees per acre."

The mountain hardwood forests were managed by law for high-quality mature timber free of disease and insect damage, for the protection of soil and water, for improved habitat for fish and wildlife, and for a variety of recreational uses. Rangers Nicholson and Woody, mountaineer woodsmen untrained in professional forestry, were not too excited about us young foresters just out of school, taking a crew of untrained city kids into the woods with axes to girdle and remove trees of one species to favor another species; to cut down pine trees that had a conk near the top of the tree (an indication of heart rot in pines to the forester) and burying the conk to keep its spores (seed) from spreading to other pines. They disliked Timber Stand Improvement but we just accepted them as great woodsmen with some old-fash-

ioned ideas. Many of us felt that we were making mistakes in girdling large sound trees of hickory and other species to give sunlight to a small tree of a more desired species, but we were under orders and in the learning process. The CCC gave a great boost to forestry and the overall effect was improved management and harvesting of timber through a selection system that maintained a canopy and uneven-aged forests in the southern Appalachians and favored the multiple uses of recreation, wildlife, water and quality timber for which our mountain National Forests are famous.

If you have read this far, I am sure that you are wondering what this old codger is getting at. Well, I am trying to read a little history into our future--recognizing that we have had problems in the past in our forest practices and we have evolved into better systems with experience. We reached a period in the early 1950's when the Appalachian National Forests were doing pretty well in providing the multiple uses demanded of the forests and providing a supply of quality timber for the marketplace. It was almost inevitable that there would be some who wanted to speed up the cutting of timber and others who would want to increase other uses of the forests. The timber lobby prevailed and influenced Congress to increase the allowable sale quantity (ASQ) and establish timber goals for Ranger Districts which lead to more drastic cutting programs. This in turn led to widespread clearcutting (almost 100 percent of all sales) and a public dissatisfaction with the way our National Forests were being managed, not only in the Appalachians, but throughout the United States. A large number of foresters, as well as the public, became quite concerned and the great debate of the last five to ten years evolved.

In 1982 the Western North Carolina Alliance was born as a result of public disapproval of mineral and oil explorations in the Nantahala-Pisgah Forests. These issues were soon resolved by the end of the oil crisis. The

---

*Walton Smith retired from the United States Forest Service after 33 years of employment and resides on an 150-acre forest near Franklin, North Carolina. He devotes his time to managing this private forest and work as a forestry consultant. In 1991, Mr. Smith was awarded the Nancy Susan Reynolds prize for advocacy for his work in helping citizens understand forestry issues.*



Alliance then cut its teeth on the new draft plan of the Nantahala-Pisgah which called for virtually 100 percent clearcutting. From a membership of about 100 the Alliance grew as it took on a criticism of the draft plan, an appeal of the final plan, and an appeal of the the Little Laurel timber sale in the Cowee mountains. It also took on other conservation issues facing western North Carolina including clean water, hazardous wastes, nuclear waste disposal and clean air. The Forest Management Task Force grew to be the strongest arm of the Alliance and developed a great deal of support through its timber sales appeals programs, its 1989 "Cut the Clearcutting" campaign with 16,000 petition-signing supporters and its continuous field activities by dozens of members working with the foresters at the Ranger District levels to modify timber harvesting methods.

The Alliance supports the National Forest System in which our National Forests are managed for multiple uses. We recognize the need for wilderness in national Forests such as Joyce Kilmer, Linville Gorge, Shining Rock, and in the National Parks, but we leave wilderness battles to others and focus on managed areas of the forests. The National Parks are not multiple-use areas. The Alliance wants the National Forests continued under their present charter, but the timber management policies of the National Forests should be changed to

meet public desires for continuous canopies, plant and animal diversity, protection of water and wildlife, abundant high quality recreation possibilities and continuous supplies of high quality mature timber.

### Some Guidelines on Silviculture

The word silviculture means "care of the forest." Given time, nature is the greatest silviculturist, and produces the finest diverse forests which are adapted to specific soils, climate and topography. The human silviculturist can speed things up and often makes drastic changes, but seldom has improved greatly the quality of the trees produced. Nature uses all known types of silviculture, from clearcutting to single tree selection, and man would do well to mimic nature in methods and scope.

There are two major forestry practices. The first is even-aged management and begins with an open area that is allowed to seed naturally, resprout from established root systems or planted with trees. The other method is uneven-aged management, when the forest contains trees of all size classes and ages. In uneven-aged management, nature harvests trees primarily by mortality, supplemented by lightning strikes, windstorms, fires and floods. When these natural disasters cover several acres or more, they often produce even-aged forests that will eventually return to an uneven-aged condition.



*Clearcut in Grandfather Ranger District, Caldwell County. Many clearcuts involve extensive road building and disturbance of steep slopes.*

### Even-Aged Management

When man produces an even-aged forest, the land is cleared and either a new crop of trees is planted or reproduction from sprouts that come up from the cut stumps is depended upon. To change the species of trees, a site may be prepared by burning, using herbicides or mechanical means with tractors and heavy equipment. In some instances, the silviculturist will use a shelterwood system in which about a third of the older trees are left standing and everything else is cut. The trees left standing are meant to provide seed for new trees to be established. After ten to fifteen years, these will be cut, leaving an even-aged stand of young trees.

The major method used by the Forest Service to get even-aged stands is to clearcut all of the trees one inch and larger in diameter on an area 20 to 40 acres in size, usually in a rectangular or square block. More recently, some silviculturists have advocated clearcutting in patches one half to several acres in size so that the cutting will not be as noticeable. The practice is not dependant on the size of the clearcut, and all trees, regardless of size, vigor or quality are felled, whether they are used or not.

When the silviculturist practices even-aged forestry, it is usually an attempt to get one or a few intolerant tree species to dominate, such as pine, yellow poplar, oak and those that demand a lot of sunshine to grow and prosper. The shade-tolerant species, such as beech, birch, hemlock and some semi-tolerant like cherry, hickory, ash and some oaks are usually discriminated against under even-aged management, thus decreasing the variety of species that occur naturally. When even-aged management is practiced, there is often a need to control vegetation to promote the intolerant species.

Once an even-aged stand of trees of one or a few species has been established, it is maintained by thinning the trees in 30 to 40 years and again when harvested after 30, 40, 50, 60, 80, 100 or 120 years. The time of harvest (called the rotation age) is primarily dependent on the species of tree, the fertility of the soil and the use that is to be made of the wood. If the product is to be pulpwood or fiber, the rotation age or time of harvesting may be very short; if the product is high quality veneer logs then the rotation will be long, from 80 to 120 years or more.

### Uneven-Aged Management

Prior to the settlement of America by the Europeans, Appalachian hardwood forests contained a mixture of trees of many species and age classes. Sizes ranged from the smallest seedlings to giant trees, poplars, oaks and other species, measuring up to eight feet in diameter. Large trees died and fell to the forest floor creating sunny openings in which new seedlings flourished. The diverse mosaic of forest communities included oaks, hickories, cove hardwoods, chestnut, spruce, fir, hemlock, white pine and yellow pine, each adapted to specific site conditions of soil, moisture, exposure and ele-



*The Natchala National Forest 18 years after an USFS selection harvest.*

vation. Trees were killed by lightning, disease and insects, and canopies were broken up by ice storms and many other causes, always creating light openings for new plants and trees. In some cases, openings were large and the new forest that grew up created an even-aged forest within the overall uneven-aged pattern. The even-aged forest areas might persist for 50 to 100 years, but they gradually reverted to the uneven-aged condition unless another catastrophe occurred. The pioneer discoverers described vast uneven-aged hardwood forests scattered throughout the Appalachians.

Initially, the finest-quality timber harvested from the Appalachians was 200 years and older. The ordinary American timber grower is not willing to wait several generations between harvests as some European growers, but these long rotations are required to produce high-quality timber. The majority of Americans prefer that the National Forests be operated on longer rotations. Under a sustained-yield program, harvest is balanced against growth. Given the large amount of land in the National Forests, cuts of 1/200th, 1/100th, or 1/80th of the National Forests would still supply a very large quantity of fine hardwood timber to the forest products industry.

In even-aged management, foresters select only one rotation for a single stand. In uneven-aged management,

the rotation may vary by species and timber quality, allowing a number of rotations on the same acre. For example, scarlet oak and white oak, which mature at about 60 and 200 years respectively, could each reach maturity before harvest through the uneven-aged selection system.

Uneven-aged management is the most difficult type of hardwood silviculture to practice and one of the major reasons why foresters shy away from it. Selective logging is used to ensure that a growing stand of hardwoods is composed of sun-tolerant and intolerant species of varying rotation ages, that originated primarily from seedlings with new root systems rather than sprouts from old root systems.

Successful selective cutting requires an understanding of a range of fields from biology to geography. Species identification, knowledge of growth characteristics and individual tree quality are critical to proper management. Site characteristics, such as soil type, topography and aspect, and the market for timber are also important factors in stand management. Throughout this process, food and shelter for forest wildlife, especially endangered plant and animal species, must be considered.

## Harvest

The first step in timber harvesting is the identification of a stand of timber of similar characteristics. The stand may vary from 10 to 200 acres. In the Appalachians, it is often all or part of a watershed. Then an inventory of the stand is undertaken, recording size, species and age class of trees present to determine the volume and distribution of timber that exists. The inventory is used to decide how much timber should be cut. Usually one-fourth to one-third of the merchantable timber plus lower-quality smaller trees are harvested.

With this information, the forester examines each tree in the stand. Trees that have reached their maturity and quality are marked for harvest. Other large trees that could be used for sawlogs are judged for their potential 15 to 20 years down the road. Pole-sized timber (six to twelve inches in diameter) can be left to grow to maturity or removed from the stand to give better trees more freedom for growth.

The silviculturist must always plan for regrowth in openings developed by harvesting. Good trees of desired species must be left to cast seed, and openings must be large enough to allow sufficient sunlight for a new generation of trees. At the same time, riparian strips along streams are essential to maintaining proper water temperature and quality; many trees that may have no future timber value, such as dogwood, sourwood and hawthorne, must be left to provide food and shelter for wildlife.

The basic difference between uneven- and even-aged management is how trees are selected for harvesting. In uneven-aged management, prime trees are cut while others are left to mature. Even-aged management requires that every stem be cut, regardless of its age, quality, growing condition or marketability.

## WNC Alliance Position

In recent years, Congress has set timber quotas for timber production on the National Forests. These goals have pressured the Forest Service to formulate overly optimistic allowable-sale quantities in excess of the amount of timber available under uneven-aged management. These politically-based targets force forest supervisors and rangers to include steep slopes and remote areas in the "timber base", and clearcut immature and low-quality stands, resulting in a lot of fiber wood and the depletion of high-quality forest areas. Although Congress and the forest industry continue to demand that these goals be met, many foresters in and out of the U.S. Forest Service realize that the forests cannot support such volumes without serious ecological degradation.

The WNC Alliance is a strong supporter of the uneven-aged system of managing Appalachian hardwoods for timber on the National Forests. Nevertheless, the Alliance recognizes that uneven-aged management will not suffice for all circumstances. Calamitous natural events such as fire, disease, insects, floods, windstorms or climatic changes create forest conditions that require drastic measures to re-establish a healthy forest in a short time. When such conditions occur, the forester can consider methods of clearcutting, shelterwood or patch clearcutting to restore the forest; over a period of years, the forest can revert to uneven-aged management.

The Appalachian National Forests were managed as uneven-aged forests from the time they were established in the early twentieth century until the sixties. They produced quality hardwood timber for the hardwood industry for furniture, panelling, boats and many other uses. The tree tops, low-grade trees and thinnings provided a useful source of fiber for paper mills, synthetic board plants, tanneries and charcoal. There was no cry of protest from the people who worked with the forest industry as loggers, sawmillers, wood transporters or manufacturers. There was no cry of protest from the hunters who used the forests under permit and found ample game. There was no cry of protest from the hikers and campers who enjoyed the National Forests' continuous canopy and open roads. And the records do not reveal any below-cost sales of timber that added to the tax burden of the nation. The Alliance seeks to return to continuous canopy forestry, using the best current knowledge to achieve it. CP

# Planning as an Historic Resource: An Example from the Western Piedmont of North Carolina

Michael O. Hartley

As an archaeologist working with the historic resources of Carolina for more than twenty years I have found that the issues of planning have been an ever-present consideration in the study of our culture. It might be thought that this refers to the interface between the archaeologist or preservation planner and twentieth century change. It may also refer to the destruction of historically significant material resources, for example the excavation of a plantation ruin in the path of a bypass around Charleston or the clearance of a reservoir basin on one of our river systems.

There is, however, a broader aspect to the approach of archaeology: the ability of the discipline to examine process over time and determine the relationship of one point in time to another in terms of process. It is that aspect of the archaeological analysis of Carolina that this discussion will treat. In particular, it is intended here to examine the presence of planning in the origins of Carolina, in the origins of the Moravian towns of western North Carolina, and to draw some conclusions about the effect of that planning in the present day. Planning is a basic historic artifact of Carolina, an artifact which is visible in its material structure and in the ongoing flow of its culture.

As current planning takes place it is important to be aware that processes begun generations before continue into the present. As never before we have the capability to irrevocably transform the configuration of our landscape and in that process alter the streams of our culture. As our rate of change accelerates and our ability to affect physical change intensifies, it is important to recognize and enhance what is already present.

---

*Michael O. Hartley serves as director of the Bethania Town Lot Study under the auspices of the Bethania Historical Association. An historical archaeologist, Hartley's work focuses on the Carolinas from European contact to today.*

## Strategic Planning: English Colonization

The planned origins of Carolina lie in the Elizabethan period in England, when the ascension of Elizabeth to the throne provided a new stability which allowed that nation to consider participation in the colonial activities of America. Spain, the arch enemy of England, and other European nations were making great headway in the acquisition of lands and wealth in the New World. England was initially left out because of internal disruption, but her location on the western edge of the European continent was well-placed with regard to the Atlantic routes. England was now positioned in the mainstream of the Atlantic rather than on the periphery of the Mediterranean center as she had been in the past. With this advantageous positioning and the stability of a powerful monarch, England turned its consideration to the acquisition of New World land and wealth.

The method taken by the Elizabethans was not based on the throwing out of blind and blundering probes; it was founded on careful and considered planning. Two scholars, cousins who were both named Richard Hakluyt, were engaged on the highest levels of English decision-making to formulate plans for England's entry into the colonial enterprise. These two cousins first gathered all the accounts of explorations and conditions of the New World which could be obtained, translating those which were in foreign tongues into English. These were eventually published under the title *Diverse Voyages to America* in 1582. The accounts were analyzed and synthesized into a plan for English entry into the colonial contest.

Two basic Hakluyt documents, *Notes On Colonization* (1578) and the *Discourse Of Western Planting* (1584), present the substance of the English plan, which eventually led to the formation of Carolina. The first work, *Notes On Colonization*, deals with the elements of the individual colony, whereas the much longer and more comprehensive *Discourse* identifies strategic goals and

procedures to be employed in the acquisition of New World lands desired by the English. Taken together they constitute a generic model of the individual colony and the role of such colonies in the broad strategic context of New World colonization.

In summary, the English strategic model identified the area of interest as lying on the continent of North America from 30 degrees North latitude, at the upper end of peninsular Florida, to Cape Briton at 47 degrees North latitude. This is the temperate zone of the continent and is basically the land mass occupied by the United States today. This area was regarded by the Hakluyts as being in the possession of no other European power (ignoring the capitol of Spanish Florida, Santa Elena, on Port Royal at present day Parris Island, SC), and was to be initially occupied on the seaboard by two to three fortified ports of the Hakluyt model.

These plans were acted on by the English throne and government, with the Roanoke voyages of the 1580's as the initial attempt to occupy the center of the proscribed area of activity. Although the attempts to the Outer Banks failed, a movement of a half-degree to the north into the Chesapeake successfully anchored the center of the English colony with the occupation of Jamestown in 1607. The location of this colony on the riverine system of the Chesapeake provided a much closer fit to the Hakluyt model for the individual colony than the initial attempts to the south on the barrier islands.

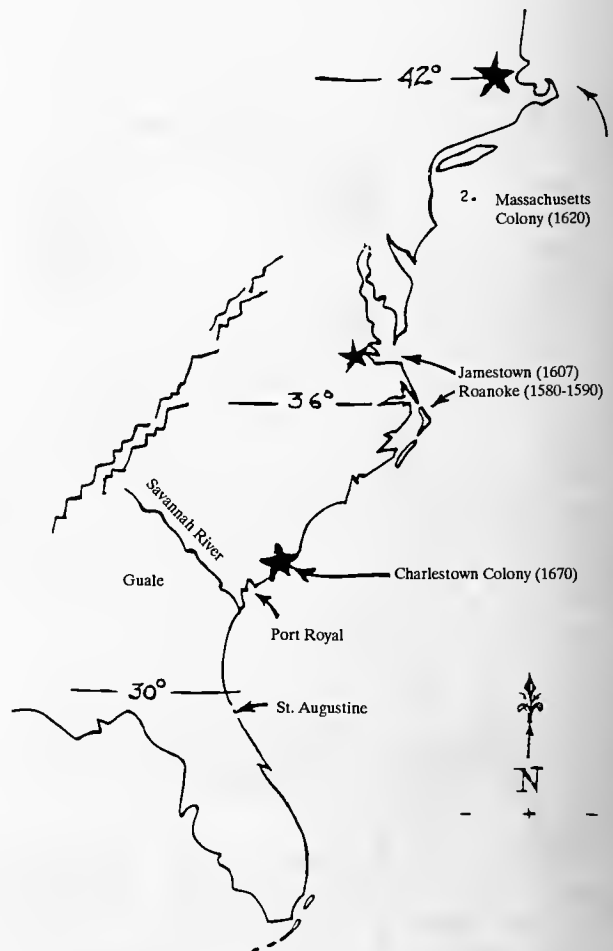
The occupation of Massachusetts in the 1620s met the requirements of the strategic plan, anchoring the northern wing of the seaboard and acting as a buffer against the newly established French on the St. Lawrence. The presence of this English colony to the north allowed expansion against the French to the north and infilling between Massachusetts and the Chesapeake, absorbing the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam that lay between the two.

The founding of Charles Town in 1670 provided the fortified port on the southern wing of the seaboard and led to the establishment of Carolina, the southern buffer against the Spanish in Florida. The form, structure and behavior of the Charles Town colony fits closely the Hakluyt model of the fortified port described in their *Notes On Colonization*.

The English established an area of no-man's land below Charles Town, lying along the Savannah River and manned by Indian warriors allied to the English colony, eventually to become the south and west boundary of Carolina. During this period the coastal zone of Carolina above Charles Town, between that colony and the Chesapeake/Albemarle settlements, saw an ever increasing infilling of colonization behind the Charles Town buffer. The North Carolina settlements of Bath, NC (1690), New Bern, NC (1710), Brunswick, NC (1725) and George Town, SC (1729) are examples of that

infilling, while Edenton, NC (1710) appears more properly to be a part of an expansion of the Chesapeake settlement into the North Carolina Albemarle.

The English had earlier attempted the settlement of Stuart Town on Port Royal to the south of Charles Town, which had immediately been attacked and destroyed by the Spanish in 1686. The successful establishment of Beaufort, SC on Port Royal (1711) increased pressure on the Spanish below Charles Town as well as on the Indian populations of the area. The Yamassee War of 1715 resulted from this movement of English settlers into the area of Port Royal and the Savannah and marked the beginning of a period of unrest on the border



*Stages of the English Model.*

which lasted for fifteen years. An outgrowth of this war was the English occupation of Guale on the coast well south of the Savannah in 1721, resulting in the creation of the colony of Georgia in 1733. Georgia assumed the functions of an expanding buffer colony, continuing the pressure on the Spanish.



Within the broad scope of the Elizabethan plan for colonization of the New World can be seen a process which adhered to form and behavior over a period of some century and a half. Charles Town is predicted in the planning of the Elizabethans in the 1570s and 1580s, and the activities of Carolina and later Georgia against the Spanish in Florida can be found explicitly called for in the scheme proposed by the two Richard Hakluyts.

While Carolina played its part in the broad scheme of English plans, it also demonstrated its individual characteristics. Established as a Proprietary colony, the region of Carolina had specific pressures relating to its vastness and the contiguity of its northern boundary to the Chesapeake. The Albemarle section of Carolina, just south of the boundary with Virginia established by the grant to the eight Lords Proprietors, resulted from expansion from the center from the center of the colony, that is, from the Chesapeake. This occurred independently from the infilling allowed by the buffer of Charles Town. Early on the presence of this settlement in Carolina required a separate government because of its great distance from Charles Town and resulted in the division of the colony into North and South Carolina.

With the coastal zone made relatively secure through military pressure against the Spanish and the ongoing subjugation of coastal native populations, this zone between the Chesapeake/Albemarle and Charles Town grew in population and solidified the English hold on the southern wing. By the 1750s the English had a firm hold on the entire seaboard of the area chosen by the Elizabethans. They had occupied the center, then the northern and southern flanks respectively, and from these positions of strength had populated the coastline of the temperate zone of North America.

### 18th Century Comprehensive Planning

It is at this point that the Moravians enter the region of Carolina. A Protestant Episcopacy with its origins in Bohemia and Moravia of central Europe, the *Unitas Fratrum* or United Brethren had already attempted to participate in Carolina. In 1734 a group of Moravians had joined Oglethorpe's settlement of Savannah in newly-established Georgia. Drawn there by missionary goals, the Moravians soon learned that Georgia was a battlefield between the English of Georgia and Carolina and the Spanish of collapsing Florida. Stability among the Indian groups was nonexistent and the fierce ongoing guerilla war involving all parties made any meaningful establishment of peaceful outposts impossible. The Moravians therefore moved to the north and established their first continental settlements at Bethlehem and elsewhere in Pennsylvania in 1740.

The leadership of the *Unitas Fratrum* was made up of people accustomed to the function of planning as a formal component of their activities. Both North and

South Carolina had ceased to be Proprietary colonies by the 1740s, but one of the Lords Proprietors had held out a one-eighth share of Carolina with rights to sell the land. Lord Granville, the last of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, came to hold the Granville Grant, basically the northern half of North Carolina.

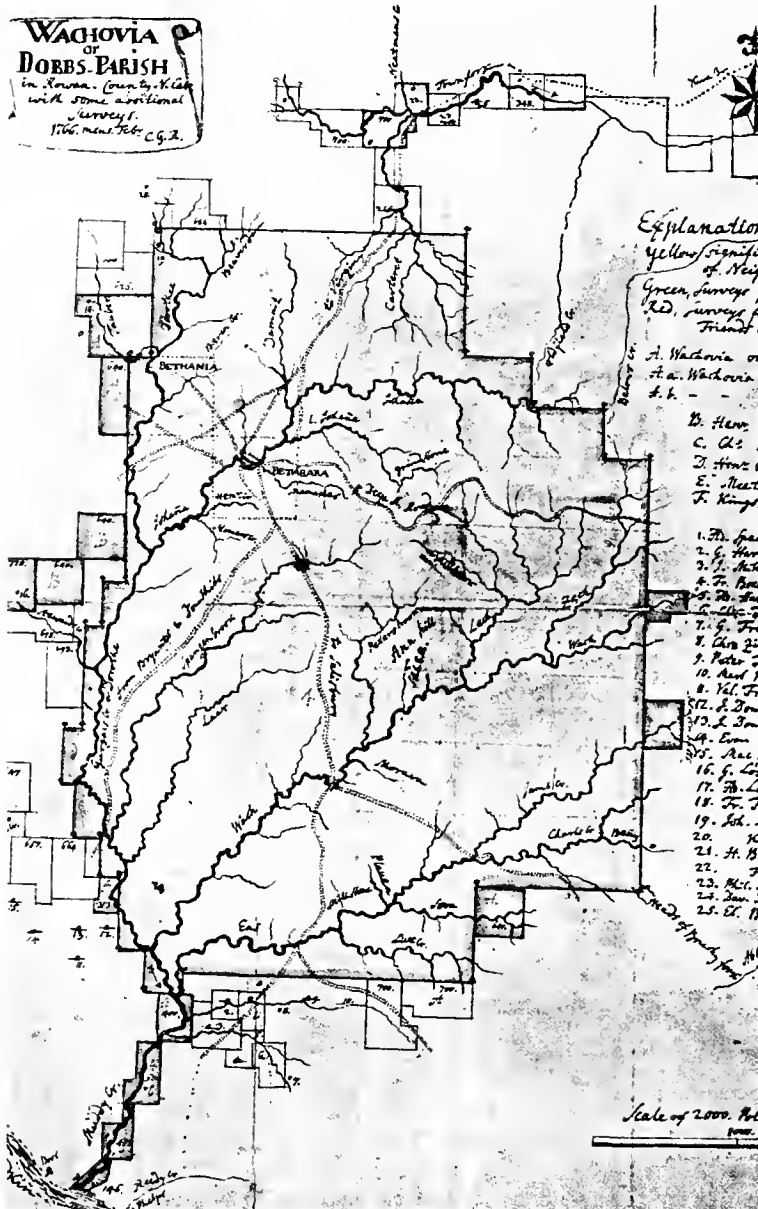
Granville came to learn of the *Unitas Fratrum* because of business the group was conducting before parliament in 1749. Learning of their demonstrated performance in Pennsylvania, Granville offered the sale of 100,000 acres of land in the Granville tract. Granville's offer meshed with the needs and goals of the Moravians. Their movement to the New World had been prompted by religious persecution in Europe, and they felt the need for a large contiguous tract of land to fully establish their desired way of life. For Granville the development of such a tract, by this time only available in the western section of Carolina, offered the possibility of opening a major settlement on the frontier of the colony.

By 1752, the terms of the sale were agreed to and the leadership of the *Unitas Fratrum* had set the plans for the tract. Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg, known as Brother Joseph to the Moravians, was selected to make the search. He was experienced in the colonies, having led the shortlived colony in Georgia in 1734, and having established Bethlehem in 1740.

Spangenberg came to North Carolina with specific instructions about the form of the Moravian tract to be followed as much as possible. He was to lay out the 100,000 acres in a square, twelve miles to the side, with a navigable river through the center. The center of the tract was to be suitable for an *Orts Gemein*, or central town, to be surrounded by outlying satellite towns within the tract. Politically, the tract was to constitute a single Moravian parish within the structure of North Carolina.

Spangenberg, with five of his Brethren, first went to Granville's land office in Edenton, on Albemarle Sound, where he conferred with Granville's agent, Sir Francis Corbin. They spent a week in Edenton, outfitting for a trek through the forest, where Spangenberg recorded in his journal that the English agent was "a walking encyclopedia concerning North Carolina affairs" after spending several hours each day with him. Granville's agent advised Spangenberg to go to the "Back of the Colony," or west to the Blue Mountains, where he might find land suitable for the tract. Joined by William Churton, the land office surveyor, and several hunters who were to also pull surveying chains for Churton and to serve as guides, Spangenberg began his search.

Spangenberg demonstrated pragmatic flexibility as he pursued the accomplishment of the Moravian plans. He immediately realized that the prospects of locating the tract on a navigable river in North Carolina were non-existent. The land on the few navigable coastal plain rivers of North Carolina had long been taken up



Survey map of Wachovia from 1766.

and was not available for a project on the scale of the Moravian tract. Discarding this criterion he began to evaluate alternatives for the trade necessary to sustain a major Moravian settlement. His journal indicates an early recognition that the settlement would be in the western part of Granville's Grant. With this knowledge, Spangenberg established that the tract would be about 300 miles from Charles Town and about 300 miles to the Chesapeake. Early in his search he also evaluated the Roanoke and Cape Fear drainages as avenues of trade from the potential location of the tract.

Spangenberg demonstrated a planner's mind working in orderly procedure. He was constantly informing himself about the region of Carolina with which he was to integrate his tract, attempting to find the best solution from the means at hand. He wrote in another context

that the basic principle of colonization was to "have the data first, and know the nature of a thing: then one can say it should be done thus or thus." Spangenberg brought to his considerations an awareness that his goals required a meshing with a process which was already in operation, the English process of Carolina. He was also aware that this process was incomplete on the frontier, and that the flexibility of that context would provide some freedom, allowing the *Unitas Fratrum* to establish a certain autonomy. This was the purpose of the new Moravian tract, the establishment of an equilibrium between established English process and the particular religious requirements of the Moravians. That balance required a planner's mind, capable of addressing both the expediencies of short-range planning and the solidity of foundation required for long-range planning.

Early in 1753, Spangenberg selected a tract of land some ten miles east of the Yadkin, which encompassed almost the entire drainage of Carguels Creek, now known as Muddy Creek. In terms of internal characteristics he selected it for a rich diversity, mentioning the countless springs and numerous fine creeks, securing his water for consumption and for power, saying as many mills as may be desired can be built. The tract contained rich bottoms and uplands, with good pasturage for cattle, plenty of stone and woodland for construction material, all contained in terrain of relatively gentle relief. While the tract was not an exact square, it was laid out on a basic rectilinear form, sixteen miles on the north-south axis by twelve miles on the east-west axis. Spangenberg named the tract *Der Wachau* after an estate in Germany belonging to Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf, an important leader of the *Unitas Fratrum* in Europe.

In terms of the broader regional context, Spangenberg noted that the tract lay on the upper road to Pennsylvania, at that time no more than a trail into the area. It was about 150 miles from a landing on the Cape Fear to which a road was to be built and about 350 miles to Edenton. When the location of *Der Wachau* is examined relative to Carolina, it is found to be on the heads of the drainages of the Yadkin, the Cape Fear and the Roanoke, close to the heads of the Santee/Catawba and the Neuse/Haw systems and on the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road at the base of the Appalachian chain. From the perspective of an interior location in colonial Carolina, the tract sits at a well-positioned hub of radiating lines connecting it to a vast region and important centers of trade.

Implementation of the plan for the Moravian tract was begun the same year it was laid out, with the establishment of the first settlement, Bethabara, by a group of Single Brothers sent down the Great Wagon Road from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania for that purpose. Finding the Wagon Road too narrow for their Pennsylvania wagon they were required to cut down its width. As they pro-

gressed they found impassable sections and frequently had to cut a new roadway. Arriving at *Der Wachau* they established themselves at an abandoned cabin which had been built by a trapper named Wagner.

Although not located in the center of the tract as required by the plan, Bethabara became the *de facto* central town of the tract, and was immediately a center on the frontier wilderness of western Carolina. The presence of a doctor, a minister and a number of craftsmen in the party of Single Brothers brought people in from as far as a hundred miles away to find aid and services.

Bethabara, meaning "House of Passage", was known by the Moravians to be a temporary location, yet the town grew in numbers of structures, population and importance. Additional Moravians came south from Pennsylvania after the establishment of the town and soon the population was made up of families sharing the communal economy of the frontier settlement.

The unrest of the French and Indian war and the subsequent Cherokee war made of Bethabara a peaceful stronghold on the frontier, fortified by a palisade and a well-filled larder. On many occasions neighbors from the surrounding countryside either fled entirely from the frontier or sought refuge in the fort at Bethabara. In the midst of these alarms, when the surrounding frontier settlements sought refuge, the *Unitas Fratrum* put in place its first planned town.

In 1759, in a period when many refugees had fled into Bethabara, Bishop Spangenberg arrived from Bethlehem to select the site for the town designed to further the process of *Der Wachau*. Selecting a site three miles northwest of Bethabara and directly across the Great Wagon Road, Spangenberg ordered the establishment of Bethania, meaning "House of the Lord."

Laid out by the newly arrived Prussian trained surveyor Phillip Reuter for survival in a hostile environment, his plan for Bethania drew on a medieval German form of clustered houses and residential lots surrounded by agricultural outlots. This was in response to an early Spangenberg dictum that the initial Moravian settlements on the frontier were to be clustered for mutual support and safety due to the Indian unrest which he accurately predicted. The occupants of the new village, established and erected within months of the site selection, were made up of eight families from the Bethabara Congregation and eight families expressing a desire to join with the Moravians selected from those who had fled into Bethabara from the Indians. Both Bethabara and Bethania continued successfully into the 1760s, when in 1766 Bethabara was directed to get on with the siting and construction of the *Orts Gemein*, the planned central town of *Der Wachau*.

Although there was some initial resistance on the part of Bethabara's residents to moving the religious,

administrative and craft facilities to a new location, the requirements of the plan for the tract were acceded to. Reuter, the surveyor and forester of the tract, selected a site near the center of the basically rectangular body of land and the central town was built by Bethabara and Bethania. Construction was begun in 1766 and Salem was formally occupied in 1772.

Bethabara's population was cut in half and the town was radically changed in function. For 20 years it had been the administrative center of the Moravian tract. It suddenly became a small agricultural village near its neighbor, Bethania. Bethabara might be thought of as somewhat analogous to a trailer set up on a modern construction site to contain the map tables, files, communications, equipment and supplies of the project at hand while the site is under construction. For a period of time that trailer is the center of activity. Then, suddenly, it is no longer needed, it is packed up and it disappears. Although Bethabara continued to have an active congregation, the village fortuitously located at the site of Wagner's cabin is now an archaeological site.

At about the same time that the central town of Salem was occupied three Country Congregations came into being at the southern end of the tract: Friedberg, Friedland and Hope.

Made up of people migrating to *Der Wachau* because of a desire to participate in the Moravian experience in North Carolina, none of the three had a formal town organization, although each had a defined town lot. By the time of the formal occupation of Salem in 1772, the frontier had moved well beyond the Moravian tract. The threat of Indian attack was remote and the surrounding population, now substantial, had been flowing down the Great Wagon Road in thousands, sustained by the presence of the Moravian towns of Bethabara and Bethania.

Spangenberg had said in 1752 that at first his Moravians must live close to one another in clustered settlement, but when the area became more settled, as it must, then it would be possible for the inhabitants of the tract to live on individual farms. Residence on individual farm lots was the form of settlement in Friedberg, Friedland and Hope, occupied at the end of the colonial period. This was much closer in pattern to the surrounding North Carolina pattern of settlement than the earlier Moravian settlements of Bethabara, Bethania and Salem.

From the laying out of the tract in 1753 until the near end of the colonial period, *Der Wachau* is an illustration of successful adherence to planning goals. Coming into the wilderness of Carolina with a concept in mind, in less than 25 years the Moravians brought the concept into reality, a body of land with a preplanned internal structure and a preplanned relationship with the containing community.

The relationship of the tract to the broader context of Carolina was one of great importance. The Moravian tract of *Der Wachau*, called Wachovia by the English, was a most important anchor for the pre-Revolutionary maturation of Carolina. It was this tract of Wachovia which sustained the frontier of northwestern Carolina during the Indian wars of the 1750s and 1760s and which provided a major center on the Great Wagon Road to sustain the early immigrant populations pouring down that thoroughfare. It is interesting to recall that its presence was initiated by the last of English Lords Proprietors of Carolina, even though Granville may not have been fully functional as a Lord Proprietor at the time.

The English partially acceded to the Moravian desire for their own Parrish by establishing Dobb's Parrish co-terminus with Wachovia. The Moravians, however, were never given full political control of their affairs and received some direction from the courthouse established at Salisbury. The tract was never divided in the formation of new counties on the frontier, although this was once proposed but put off through complaint of the Moravians.

In 1849 the new county of Forsyth was created, a county which is in effect an expanded Wachovia. The desire to have Salem function as the county seat was objected to by the Moravians, but with their acquiescence the secular county seat of Winston was grafted onto the Salem Town Lot and in 1913 the hyphenated name of Winston-Salem was adopted.

## Conclusions

The examination of Carolina and its elements reveals that plans put in place by colonial settlers are not dry and distant events of antiquity. Rather they are the basis for ongoing processes which extend strongly into the present. The intentions of past planners have a durability which transcends generations and successive governments. This durability is particularly evident when the plans carry the cultural weight of carefully formulated Elizabethan concepts for the settlement of a continent, or the establishment of a Moravian settlement or a North Carolina county. This is exemplified by the region of Carolina. Winston-Salem is rapidly growing into the physiography of Wachovia both supported and constrained by the Muddy Creek drainage basin chosen by Bishop Spangenburg in 1753. Faced with this expansion, outlying historic communities find the rapid change of 20th century growth a threat to their long-term stability.

Recognizing that Forsyth County is the Wachovia Tract expanded, study of the tract and its elements has provided input for the planning process which has produced substantive results. Initial plans for a northwest

Beltway around Winston-Salem through Forsyth County proposed a corridor directly through the village of Bethania. The route as originally conceived intruded directly into the core of the 1759 Town lot at the foot of God's Acre Hill. God's Acre is the Moravian name for a graveyard, an important focal point for each Moravian congregation.

In 1991, the Bethania National Register District was increased from 50 acres (established in 1975 based on standing structures along Main Street) to 500 acres to encompass the significant agricultural lands, forests and colonial road system which surrounded the settlement. An immediate benefit of this expansion in the planning process was the elimination of proposals for any Beltway corridor which would intrude on the Bethania Town Lot. Awareness of Bethania's significance continues to increase and the National Park Service is currently preparing a nomination to elevate Bethania to Landmark status based on the the 1991 National Register amendment and boundary expansion.

Similarly, but on a different scale, a proposal to widen and pave a historic lane within the village of Bethania was deemed a threat to the roadway as well as adjacent historic and archaeological sites. Negotiation with district and state Department of Transportation engineers and environmental officials resulted in the lane being paved in its existing dimensions with a surfacing of tan pea gravel. As a result, the lane was stabilized with a sensitive appearance that did not negatively impact the character of the historic village.

Both proposals would have been detrimental had they been carried through as originally planned without awareness of Bethania's past and the relationship of the existing community to that past. As professionals working at the turn of the 21st century, it is important to recognize and understand that deliberate and explicit past planning has been an integral part of the reality of Carolina in company with deep seated implicit traditions. Current planning cannot take place on a clean slate and the presence of powerful plans and goals originating in past generations must be acknowledged. Awareness of history and culture is not merely a nicety in planning, it is basic to understanding the community. If the future is to be planned for, then that planning must incorporate the past and the planning which deliberately shaped our past and our present.

Carolina, with its relatively short period of existence rooted in colonial and post-colonial settlement, offers much information about extended effects of plans, successful and otherwise. Those interested in the long-range view have much to gain through the awareness and study of these processes. CP

# Western North Carolina Planning Policies: A Decade in Review

---

Frank L. Caldwell  
Susan M. Smith

**O**ur grandchildren and great-grandchildren must have pure air, clean water, park lands, mineral and timber resources, and rich soil. If we destroy these, the Lord may forgive us, but our children and grandchildren will not. Former Congressman Roy A. Taylor, who represented the mountain region from 1960 to 1976.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1981, a joint project of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and the Center for Improving Mountain Living (Western Carolina University), supported by the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, issued a report entitled *Growth Management and the Future of Western North Carolina*.<sup>2</sup> According to that report, the "future" for environmental protection and land-use planning in western North Carolina was about ten years away. The report anticipated that interest in "growth management" would increase when county leaders recognized the need for balance between economic development, traditional lifestyles and the environment.

Nearly eleven years have passed since publication of that report, and, true to the prediction, concern about

those issues appears to be increasing throughout the region. For example, in the early eighties, leaders of all eight of the environmental interest action groups in the region would meet periodically around a single, small conference table to discuss issues of mutual interest. Today, there are over 50 such groups active throughout the region. While some of these groups focus on only a single issue, others are involved in a broad array of environmental and land-use concerns.

Then, as now, public sentiment on the appropriate role of individuals, communities and local, state and federal government agencies in environmental and land-use planning ranges from absolute *laissez faire* individualism to state and federal dominance. However, it now appears public sentiment increasingly favors community and local government responsibility for these decisions.

The 1981 study found that most western North Carolina county budgets were considerably smaller than the state average, with the majority of each budget being devoted to school systems. While county budgets have generally kept pace with inflation, the western counties remain in the same position relative to the rest of the state. Many counties still have no full-time administrator or manager. In some counties, one of the county commissioners also serves as the county manager. Only six of the westernmost seventeen counties list the position of county planner in the 1992 *Directory of State and County Officials in North Carolina*. Other county employees who have a major role in land-use matters are the building inspectors and sanitarians who are responsible for enforcing state-mandated building codes and septic tank regulations.

This lack of local personnel and financial resources is troubling to those people who prefer local control of planning decisions. They recognize that unless local communities begin to take responsible actions to con-

---

*Frank L. Caldwell, J.D. is currently a Community Development Specialist for the Economic Development Division of Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living, and is pursuing a master's degree in project management at WCU. He holds a B.A. degree in Political Science and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences from the University of South Florida and a J.D. degree from Florida State University. Susan M. Smith, Ed.D. is the Associate Director of Natural Resources at Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living, a position she has held since 1978. She holds a B.S. degree in biology and chemistry from Berry College, an M.S.P.H., from the University of North Carolina, and a Doctor of Education from the University of Tennessee.*



trol their own destiny, the state is likely to impose undesirable regulations. A variety of surveys conducted in mountain counties in the past three years reflects this recognition. A recent survey conducted of all Macon County property owners indicates that a majority of respondents favor a stronger local role in planning for the county.

The 1981 report also provides a telling reminder about the fate of previous attempts by the General Assembly to mandate land-use planning in the mountain region without local input. The report suggests that the most significant result of the 1973 and 1975 gubernatorial and legislative initiatives to enact the Mountain Area Management Act may have been to solidify regional opposition to any form of government action in land matters.

The 1981 report set forth a series of recommendations for state, local, regional and federal actions necessary to bring about an appropriate balance in the "three-legged stool" of individual lifestyle, environmental protection and economic development. These recommendations were distilled from suggestions made by "local leaders," defined as county commissioners, health directors, sanitarians, planners, savings and loan officials, builders and realtors in representative counties throughout the western region.

What follows is a summary of several recommendations from the 1981 report, a short commentary on governmental or community action in the intervening eleven years and observations about the relevance of the recommendations in late 1992.

### State Government

*1. Improved enforcement of existing regulations.* Suggested maximum enforcement of existing state regulations (sedimentation control, septic system, building codes) before imposing additional regulatory requirements. Such enforcement should include adequate funding and staffing, and take into account the unique terrain in the mountain region.

*Update:* Continued growth coupled with cutbacks in state and federal funding for local programs have resulted in increased local responsibilities with little or no increase in funding or staff support. In many counties, personnel cannot meet the demand for enforcement of current regulations. The limited personnel and travel funds hinder enforcement of current erosion control regulations in many rural parts of the mountain region and severely restrict the initiation of substantive programs focused on education and prevention.

*2. Focus on local governments.* Recommended that new state land-use and environmental regulation of



*Burley tobacco field in August.*

local activities use the "state-mandated, local-enforcement approach," with appropriate phasing-in periods to allow for staff and public education.

*Update:* While the 1983 "North Carolina Ridge Law" is an example of the suggested approach, the more recent 1991 "Draft Watershed Protection Rules" signaled a return to the "Raleigh knows best" attitude. The "Ridge Law" was initiated because of concerns expressed by mountain residents about the environmental, aesthetic and public safety affects of high-rise ridge-top development. It provides local residents with the opportunity to adopt the state law, develop a comparable county ordinance or opt, by referendum, to impose no regulation on such development. In contrast, the Watershed Protection regulations were developed and imposed with little effective participation on the part of those property owners and local community leaders affected by the law.

3. *Add eligibility requirements to grants-in-aid programs.* Suggested that the state link local financial assistance to state policy initiatives such as the Balanced Growth Policy, and to local government capital-improvements planning.

*Update:* Several other states, including Florida and Georgia, have adopted the "carrot and stick" approach of either providing a financial inducement for local governments that undertake comprehensive land-use planning strategies or withholding development-related grant funds from those communities that fail to address planning issues.

4. *An increased role for education and extension.* Recommended that the state should build local-government capacity by sponsoring and conducting more workshops on environmental protection and economic development issues in rural areas, as well as developing "model" ordinances tailored to mountainous/rural terrain.

*Update:* While the Institute of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill has continued to develop professional education workshops and materials for local government officials, budget cutbacks curtailed travel allowances for local representatives wanting to attend such workshops, while also increasing workload demands on those representatives. Since 1981, the legislature has authorized only one two-year pilot effort, funding a planning position in Avery County to draft model ordinances. In addition, the state with funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission, created a special program in 1991 allowing counties to apply for assistance in generating local land-use maps. Program funding was limited to no more than \$30,000 per county for one year only. The state failed to provide the responsible administrative division with funding specifically earmarked for the program or for the necessary computer mapping equipment. This lack of commitment forced the Division of Community Assistance to seek private

foundation funding to acquire the necessary computer mapping hardware system needed by its regional office to assist local counties.

## Local Government

1. *Increase use of impact assessments and subdivision regulations.* Suggested that local governments experiencing or expecting seasonal recreational development should adopt programs to anticipate and provide for increased demand for services. In 1981, counties had the authority to require environmental assessments for all developments greater than two acres. Assessments of size, terrain, water, sewer, road and maintenance suitability, and effects on county services and transportation could be required. Council of Government, Soil Conservation Service and the Departments of Natural Resources and Community Development field office staff were available to assist counties in evaluating such assessments. Counties were encouraged to consider requirements for vacation developments based on their size and future service demands. The suggested forms of such requirements included various permit fees, performance bonds or service maintenance funds, developer or homeowner association provision of certain services, subdivision plat review and minimum lot sizes. Most of these requirements could be triggered by a subdivision ordinance providing size thresholds for the proposed developments.

*Update:* As of June 1990, only seven of the 24 western-most counties in North Carolina had adopted a subdivision ordinance.<sup>3</sup> Another county provides for predevelopment review of proposed large-scale developments. Burke County has adopted a Land-Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) as an alternative to a traditional zoning ordinance (See sidebar). The interest expressed by several county planning boards and many citizen groups in the Land-Use Guidance System further emphasizes the attraction of "functional" planning and management systems that meet local needs, include public participation and are realistic and practical.

2. *Focus on local capacity building.* Recommended that local governments expand their staff capabilities, using Soil Conservation Service and state field office staff resources more frequently. The report also suggested that the exploration of alternative arrangements, such as the use of part-time staff through contracts with councils of government, joint city-county staff and sharing staff among counties; and that existing staff meet state competency requirements.

*Update:* As of late 1992, no cities and counties in western North Carolina had established joint planning boards. Several counties have, however, contracted with their respective councils of government to provide project and technical services. The budget restraints of recent years have discouraged some counties from sending their staff members to competency-building education

## A Functional Alternative to Zoning in Rural Counties

The Burke County, North Carolina, Land-Use Management Ordinance is patterned after the Bedford County, Virginia, Land-Use Guidance System (LUGS). Several other counties are considering the LUGS/LUMO approach. The Land-Use Management Ordinance is based on the County's Comprehensive Land-Use Plan's Goals and Objectives to promote growth while protecting the environmental integrity and physical aesthetics of the county. Violation of the goals and objectives would harm the common good and impose unnecessary burdens on the community and individuals affected by land development. Individual developments will not be predesignated for particular locations, as in traditional zoning, but rather must adhere to the principle of free use of property as long as such use does not impose an excessively negative burden on the environment or the community. Proposed changes in land-use are submitted to the county planning staff, which classifies the proposal as one of four uses: *Prohibited uses* include hazardous/nuclear waste disposal or storage, non-county established landfills, development that would destroy historic sites and flashing signs. *Exempt uses* include agriculture, bonafide farms, yard sales, produce stands, most signs and home occupations. *Uses-by-right* include single family residences and expansion of existing use not to exceed 50 percent of the current use. *Allowable/Permitted uses* include any use not otherwise considered prohibited, exempt or use-by-right.

The impact of a proposed development is evaluated on environmental and community guidelines. A rating system or Growth Guidance Assessment is based on a point system, considering (1) Percent of surrounding area developed; (2) Similarity of development in the area; (3) Proximity to designated growth areas; (4) Impact on the public school system; (5) Road characteristics affecting the site; (6) Air quality impact; (7) Distance from historic sites; (8) Type of water system; (9) Type of sewage system; (10) Distance to a fire station; and (11) Distance to a rescue squad or ambulance base.

The assignment of points is based on the preservation of the environment and on protection of prime agriculture land from unordered growth. The second evaluation is based on a two-fold community impact criterion: the evaluation of tangible factors, including: percent of surrounding land which is developed, road access, public water and sewer access, and distance to schools, fire and rescue services, and similar factors. This evaluation encourages development in already established growth areas with easy access to public facilities. This reduces



Linville Gorge Wilderness Area in Burke County.

the scattering of development and allows for the efficient provision of public services. The second community impact evaluation requires a compatibility assessment. The developer is required to present his plans at a well-publicized open public meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to determine the project's impact on surrounding properties. The developer may choose to voluntarily implement changes to mitigate identified negative impacts. Should the project remain incompatible with the public good, the Planning Board, or other appropriate local board, can make a determination on the approval of the project based on all available evidence. The basic premise of LUMO is to make the proposal compatible with surrounding existing uses, not to find ways to deny a project. The compatibility meeting is intended to insure that new development does not have a detrimental effect on established uses. The best determination for harmonious growth is considered to be public opinion, particularly that of neighbors and adjacent land owners. LUMO creates a greater flexibility than traditional zoning because there are no predetermined use zones. The ordinance provides flexibility, fairness, speed in processing and public participation. If citizens of the county do not feel that LUMO will adequately protect their neighborhood, they can petition for a conversion to "Other Use Districts," or the establishment of a traditional zone. These zones may be residential-agriculture; medium density; office and institutional; neighborhood business; highway business; or industrial. To qualify for conversion, the land area must be at least one square mile with at least ten property owners; or contiguous parcels under separate ownership; or a single owner of at least 50 acres may request a change to an industrial district classification. Before a reclassification is approved, at least three-fourths of the property owners within the area must agree. ("Burke County Land-Use Management Ordinance," undated, unnumbered)

courses; however, in 1991, twelve county and community groups with assistance from the Western North Carolina Tomorrow, a citizen leadership council serving the seventeen westernmost counties in North Carolina, acquired matching funds that enabled over 50 community leaders to take field trips to study land-use systems in Virginia and Georgia. The commitment and follow-through of these county and community organizations to support hands-on training and information exchange reflects a growing recognition that new methods to meet rural planning needs must be understood and evaluated.

**3. Experiment with joint public-private sector programs.** Suggested that counties supplement local regulations by seeking cooperation from lending institutions and building and realty associations to incorporate criteria such as suitability for private water or sewer systems and site construction methods in subdivision development loan applications. Government staff should offer education programs for development-related groups, covering topics such as "best practices" for construction and state and local requirements. These programs could be offered at association meetings or sponsored through the continuing education offices of local community and technical colleges.

**Update:** Between 1985 and 1992, Western North Carolina Tomorrow distributed over 10,000 copies of an eleven-page booklet entitled *A Mountain Home--Before You Buy*, which advises new home buyers about special considerations in buying mountain property. Thousands of these booklets were purchased and distributed by county agencies, chambers of commerce, real estate agencies, community organizations and individuals. Another example of public-private cooperation was a regional conference on land-policy issues held in November 1992 sponsored by regional banks, educational institutions, state organizations, chambers of commerce and many other community and civic organizations.

**4. Capital-improvements planning.** Recommended that counties start capital-improvements planning and multi-year budgeting in order to estimate future service needs, costs, and county revenues. Planning for major infrastructure should be closely coordinated with land-use planning to maintain an attractive environment for continued economic development.

**Update:** Section 130A-309.08 of the North Carolina Solid Waste Management Act of 1989 requires counties and municipalities to determine the full cost of solid waste management within

the service area to encourage better planning of such facilities and services. The continued lack of planning boards or comprehensive county plans in many rural mountain counties discourages the coordination of economic development efforts.

## Regional Agencies and Institutions

**1. Expand outreach and extension programs.** Suggested that educational institutions engage in more outreach programs and seminars in conjunction with local governments, private groups and each other. Programs should be directed at improving local staff knowledge and training in specific planning techniques and strategies. Institutions were also encouraged to experiment with joint research projects on such topics as the effects of growth and regional potential for resource and economic development.

**Update:** The many public and private postsecondary institutions throughout the mountain region have continued to expand their outreach to local communities. Each institution has engaged in individual initiatives, as well as cooperating in broader collaborative efforts. The authors have been directly involved in many of the activities of Western Carolina University, through its Center for Improving Mountain Living (CIML). CIML's Local Government Training Program, co-sponsored by the Institute of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill, offered 33 regional training events in 1989-91, with an average of 40 public officials attending each event. The Center has conducted housing needs studies for several counties in the region to help local governments develop effective strategies for affordable housing for elderly and low- to moderate-income families. In 1991, the two-



*Christmas tree farm in Avery County.*



day Western North Carolina Land Management Conference sponsored by many regional groups, including Western North Carolina Tomorrow (WNCT) and CIML, attracted community leaders, planning board members and interested citizens from throughout the region. In 1992, CIML and WNCT sponsored two field trips in which local officials and community leaders travelled to Georgia and Virginia to observe several prototype land management and economic development strategies working in rural mountain communities.

*2. Assistance from councils of government.* Recommended that the four councils of government serving the mountain region enter into ongoing cooperative staffing arrangements with counties and cities to provide local governments with needed expertise.

*Update:* The number of programs in which councils of governments assist local counties has increased. Funding, however, for staff regional positions is very limited. In some cases, the lack of resources inhibits the ability of regional councils to provide the needed technical assistance. There are, however, many examples of COG cooperation with local government. The Isothermal Council of Government has provided a full-time planner to counties for one year to assist in the development of a land-use plan. The Land-of-Sky Council has worked with Buncombe County to implement a solid waste composting program partially funded by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

## Federal Government

*1. Greater sensitivity to the local impacts of federal actions.* Recommended that federal land agencies continue to evaluate the socio-economic impacts of their policies in the region, including resource development decisions and management plans. Federal regional networks should be expanded to include more local officials. Regional viewpoints should be incorporated in setting plan alternatives as well as issues. Results of impact analyses should be widely distributed and discussed with local leaders as well as other groups. The extent to which local impacts will influence federal land policy decisions should be clarified.

*Update:* The ability of federal agencies to adequately address local impacts in assessing federal actions is still a major point of discussion in the region. Over the past ten years, the opportunity to make public comments on federal decisions has increased. Whether this opportunity has been accompanied by increased responsiveness is a question that receives many different answers, depending on the agency and the project or program.

*2. Coordinate economic development programs with local growth strategies.* Suggested that federally-funded economic development activities be coordinated with local or regional growth strategies. The Tennessee Valley Authority should tie its efforts more closely to the Appalachian Regional Commission, as well as to state

and regional strategies. The role of public lands in stimulating the private recreation industry should be examined.

*Update:* The lack of local and regional growth strategies, particularly in the more rural counties, continues to inhibit the coordination of federal economic development programs with local growth strategies. Little research has been done regarding the impact of federal public-land management decisions on the private recreation industry, although the U.S. Forest Service has researched the economic value and impact of different TVA lake-level management strategies.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, TVA changed its lake-level drawdown policy to the benefit of the region's outdoor recreational industry. In a similar vein, the Mountain Outdoor Recreation Alliance, in cooperation with over 70 other organizations, agencies and businesses, adapted and applied the U.S.D.A. Forest Service's Public Area Recreation Visitor Study process to the research of outdoor recreation on private lands. [see article on pg. 41]

## Summary and Conclusions

In the past decade and a half, much thought, time and energy have been expended by western North Carolinians debating the future of land-use planning in the region. As predicted in 1981, the time for thoughtful discussion is rapidly expiring. Actions, or decisions *not to act*, made in the balance of the current decade will dramatically affect the future of western North Carolina. A failure to decide is in itself a decision. While participatory dialogue is essential throughout the decision-making process, the time for responsible action by local, regional and state policymakers is at hand.

Responsible land-use planning requires a substantial and sustained commitment of personnel and financial resources. As with building a new home, cutting corners in land-use planning today will predictably result in substantially higher repair and replacement costs in the future. Individual homes can usually be repaired or replaced. In the case of land use, however, the failure to articulate and implement a responsible plan for the mountain region will, in many cases, result in the permanent loss of the very resources which have sustained the region throughout time. CP

## Notes

1. Quoted in *Western North Carolina Tomorrow Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 1980.
2. Joanna Mack, et al., *Growth Management and the Future of Western North Carolina*. UNC, Chapel Hill, NC, 1981.
3. Mike McLaughlin, "Preserving the North Carolina Mountains: Time to Develop a Plan?," *North Carolina Insight*, Vol. 13, No. 1, December 1990, p. 9.
4. H. Ken Klinko et. al., *Economic Value and Impacts on Outdoor Recreation at Western North Carolina Lakes Under Different Management Alternatives*, Southeastern Forest Experiment Station and the University of Georgia, Department of Agricultural Economics, Athens, GA, 1990.



# To Plan or To Continue Not to Plan in Western North Carolina...

---

Garry V. Cooper

According to the 1990 census, North Carolina is, for the first time, more urban than rural. This change in demographic conditions has economic and natural resource implications for regional and state-wide growth management. Concerns regarding the ability of communities to effectively deal with growth management issues, particularly in the mountain area, resulted in legislative initiatives enacted by the 1991 North Carolina State Legislature. Senate Bill 917 created two study commissions to determine the need for mandated land-use planning in the mountain area of North Carolina (House Bill 1261) and for the state as a whole (House Bill 1157). Each initiative is controversial, due in part to both strongly held property-rights beliefs and misunderstandings about the role and usefulness of planning. This paper examines land-use planning issues in the mountain area of North Carolina, including the problems particular to the area, new perspectives that planning can bring to these problems, limitations placed on planning by the state and future directions for planning in western North Carolina.

Western North Carolina is a beautiful region, rich in scenic resources. The mountain area, as defined by physical and topographic factors, includes all or portions of 24 counties extending west from Polk County in the south to Surry County in the north. Scattered throughout the landscape are old structures that recall earlier times when agriculture was a dominant way of life for a large number of inhabitants. Tobacco is still grown, but

Christmas trees are the primary agricultural crop today. The area remains largely rural and most mountain area communities have small populations. Areas of geological and physiographic significance are abundant, and some areas, such as Grandfather Mountain, are both a tourist destination and an important wildlife habitat area. The mountains are the head waters of the Watauga, Catawba, Linville, North Toe and several other rivers. Some of the river basins drain into the Atlantic Ocean and others into the Gulf of Mexico.

Local residents and outside observers alike have become increasingly aware of growth-related problems in the mountain area. Significant growth and change has occurred over the past several decades, and much of this development took place with few or no land-use controls. Second-home development abounds. Year-round recreational opportunities and tourism modify the physical landscape. Strip commercial development along major transportation corridors is common. Insensitive development, such as the 320-unit, ten-story condominium complex on top of Sugar Mountain (near the Town of Banner Elk in Avery County), also occurs. Many other activities increasingly scar the physical environment with both temporary and permanent marks.

Two truisms drive the debate over management of the land development process. First, development will take place with or without either mandated or formalized planning. Second, once development takes place, the form and shape of the cultural landscape becomes fixed, or can be changed only at great expense. For example, imagine the difficulties and expense of removing the condominium complex on Sugar Mountain. The implication of these two truisms is that uncontrolled growth is a serious threat to achieving the goal of maintaining or improving the quality of community life. Clearly, development-related problems exist in the mountain area, and uncontrolled growth is a serious threat to achieving

---

*Garry V. Cooper earned his D.E.D. in Urban and Regional Planning from Texas A&M University. He presently serves as Assistant Professor of Community and Regional Planning and is the Planning Program Coordinator for the undergraduate planning degree program at Appalachian State University. Dr. Cooper is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.*

that goal. Is there a growth management problem in western North Carolina? Yes, there is a problem and it needs fixing, but how to fix it requires a closer look.

It is a purpose of government at all levels to address growth and change. Responses fall between two extremes: decision-making that results in uncontrolled growth or decision-making that promotes controlled growth. Uncontrolled growth is often associated with ad hoc or reactionary planning, whereas controlled growth is more often associated with anticipatory planning. Ad hoc or reactionary

planning best characterizes planning in the mountain area over the past several decades. One's perspective certainly influences the act of decision-making. Decisions can be based on market forces, physical arrangements, ecological higher laws or societal concerns. Although the process of planning can accommodate these divergent perspectives, perceptions of planning in the mountain area often preclude its implementation.

The goal of planning is to maintain or improve the quality of community life. Land-use decisions can either hinder or support the achievement of this goal. Although the process of planning will vary from one community to another, several common elements or phases exist. The process is initiated by a growing awareness of community problems, resulting in recognition of a need for planning. The next phase, direction-setting, involves values clarification, whereby a community decides the goals and objectives for planning. The research phase examines past events, assesses existing conditions and forecasts future conditions. In the formulation phase, alternative strategies, plans and courses of action are developed for the community based on the goals, objectives and knowledge of present and future conditions. These proposals are then translated into implementation actions. This is a continuous, dynamic process, which can accommodate changing needs and conditions, and provides ample opportunities for citizen participation.

A successful shift toward more controlled growth practices in the mountain area first requires acceptance of the need for planning. Overcoming the perception that planning is a threat will open the door to new perspectives for dealing with growth and change in the mountain area. State universities in North Carolina, particularly those with community and regional plan-

## Understanding the Place

### *A Dynamic Process of Planning, Decision-Making, and Change*

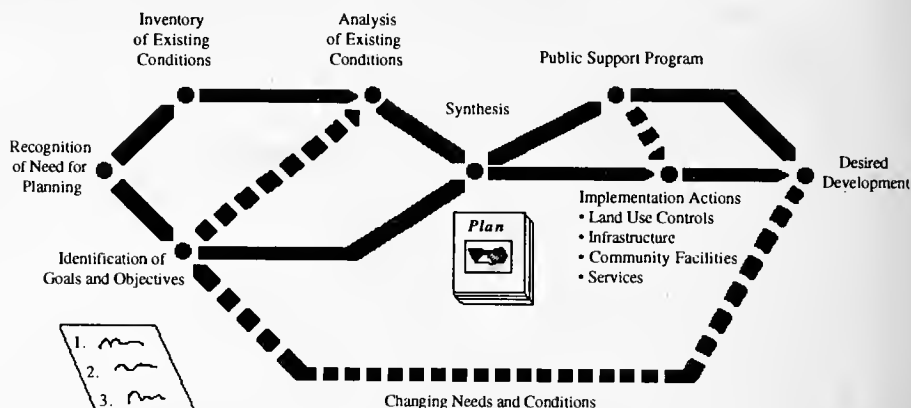


Figure 1.

ning programs, can assist mountain area communities by providing educational and technical expertise.

## Planning as a New Perspective

Planning, by virtue of its comprehensive view and participatory component, brings powerful tools to the land development process. Both the mountain region and the State of North Carolina, however, present obstacles to the implementation of planning. The application of a number of these tools and an understanding of the issues specific to western North Carolina is essential for achieving the goal of maintaining or improving the quality of community life.

### *Development Management Tools*

The planning functions most important to western North Carolina include incorporation of values, ownership, understanding of place and planning methodologies that can improve both land-use decision-making and the quality of community life.

*Values.* Is big better, or is small beautiful? What should a community conserve, and what should a community preserve? How does one balance environmental, social and economic concerns and needs...and all three with private property rights? The answers to these questions are often complex and complicated by both legal and political concerns. Although planning is the best forum for addressing these questions, final decisions are made typically in the political arena. By-passing planning only muddies the water, diminishes the quality of decision-making and adversely affects the quality of community life.

*Ownership.* A feeling of ownership in the decision-making process among community residents greatly facilitates all phases of the planning process. It is impor-

tant that community members have numerous opportunities to be heard, to hear others and to influence outcomes. A planning process that is strong in participation opportunities is less likely to be tainted by the extremes of both values and politics. Planning should enable the development of common goals and assist in their achievement.

*Understanding the place.* Because the term quality of life spans both the physical and human environments, a comprehensive understanding of place is essential to quality decision-making. Ideally, land-use decision-making is based on historical information and an inventory and analysis of existing social, economic and environmental conditions. Few mountain area communities, however, have such information. This skews the planning process, results in decision-making based on an incomplete understanding of natural and cultural processes and increases the odds that subjectivity or special interests will influence the outcome. We live in a complex and interdependent world where the interaction of human and physical elements often results in difficult environmental problems. However, few mountain communities have either the financial resources to assemble an information base or the technical skills to analyze one. This is unfortunate because available technology, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), greatly facilitates inventory and analysis of a broad range of data or factors contributing to environmental conditions.

*Planning methodology.* Methodology is the research framework used to catalog, describe and analyze inventory data. No single planning methodology as yet successfully integrates social, economic and environmental components into one package. Instead, each component is bound together under the umbrella of comprehensive planning. Inventory and analysis of environmental conditions is the largest component of land-use planning applications. Several alternative environmental planning methodologies are available to planners, including those popularized by Ian McHarg (McHarg 1969) or Philip H. Lewis and G. Angus Hill (Belknap and Furtado 1967). Although planning methods should be comprehensive and consistently applied, piece-meal and inconsistent approaches are the norm in most mountain area communities. The ideal planning methodology links the natural resource base and the community, the community and the region, and the region and the state.

#### *Philosophical and political issues*

However useful or applicable planning tools may be, a number of issues hinder their implementation in the mountain region. This is apparent in western North Carolina where the most prominent planning issue relates to the question of property rights vs. stewardship.

*Private property rights vs. stewardship responsibilities.* Many people in the mountain area will assert, "This is my land, and no one is going to tell me what to do with

it!" Others view the earth as a biosphere with several ecosystems, stressing the interdependence between all living things and the role of man as steward. NIMBY (not in my backyard) responses may cause both sides to modify their positions. For example, a few years ago a hazardous waste disposal firm proposed locating a facility in Allegheny County. This politically conservative county was without either a land-use plan or plan implementation mechanisms such as zoning or subdivision. When the firm identified that one of the hazardous waste items would be dead human fetuses, public opinion galvanized against the proposal. Some residents of this conservative county suddenly openly discussed the possibility of adopting zoning to keep the hazardous waste facility out of their community. Although the facility was never built, it took this crisis (vs. a rational planning process) to bring people together to identify their common interests and to act toward a desired end.

#### Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions

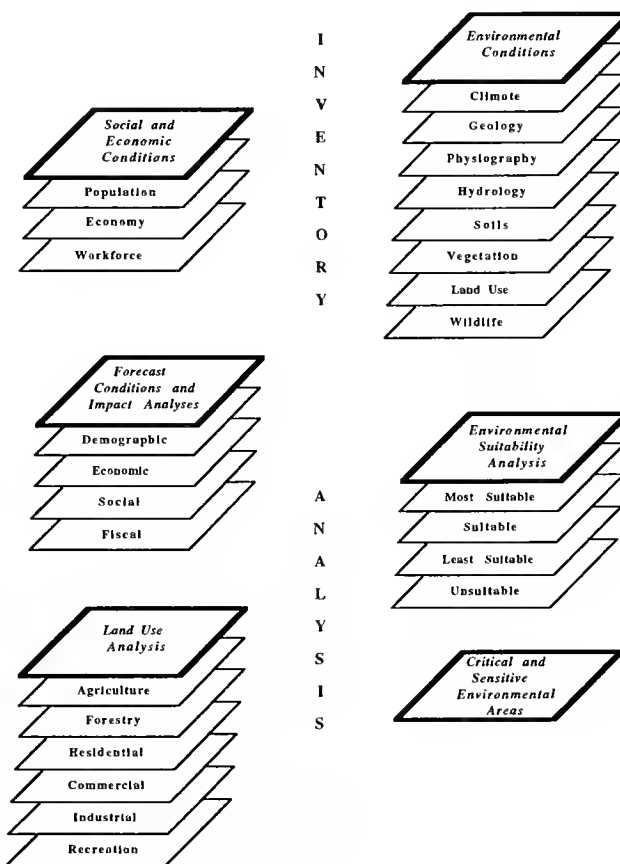


Figure 2.

Much of the authority required to institute planning regulations and controls rests in the hands of the state legislature. A number of obstacles to successful planning in the mountain area can only be cleared in Raleigh. These include greater empowerment of local government, balancing resources and creating state-wide equity.

**Empowerment.** The lack of home rule in North Carolina and the fact that the 10th amendment to the United States Constitution makes cities creatures of the state can inhibit the ability of communities to respond immediately and in an innovative manner. Even where the desire to plan creatively may exist, the authority may not. In North Carolina, when a certain planning authority is lacking or questionable, a community must request that authority from the state legislature to establish a legal base for exercising its police powers. This can be a complicated and time-consuming procedure. Home rule, which does not exist in North Carolina, could empower local government to plan creatively and, at least potentially, act in a more timely manner. Much innovative planning comes from states with home rule. One can argue that if it is good for a community to initiate participatory planning, why not also include community-based authority through home rule?

**Resources.** Mandated planning requires all communities to plan, but does not address the individual capability to do so. Even when recognition of a need for planning is great, the stark reality is that most mountain area communities have meager technical capability and fiscal resources to accomplish mandated planning. For example, Banner Elk is a small mountain community with a 1990 population of 933. Actual planning practice in Banner Elk includes participation in only a few phases of the planning process. The desire exists to do more, but the resources are simply not available. It is sometimes difficult for Banner Elk to keep its only back hoe running, so imagine how the town would react when told that they must hire a planner (or planning consultant), or procure a computer GIS work station! Because planning is not a strong or practiced tradition in most mountain communities, mandated planning will force these communities into a foreign environment.

**Equity.** North Carolina has three distinct physiographic regions: the coastal plain, the piedmont and the mountains. Although each of these regions have unique planning needs, the planning process is the same within all three. To single out one or two regions for mandated planning is potentially divisive and over both the short term and the long term can create at least a perception of harm that tarnishes the intended benefits.

The study commission created by House Bill 1261 will soon recommend whether or not mandated land-use planning in the mountain area of North Carolina is needed. The recommendation will be controversial because of the complexity of philosophical and political issues in western North Carolina. The argument for mandated planning is strong, but such a recommendation should include several caveats. First, any requirements must recognize the needs of mountain people and mountain communities. Although the mandate to plan is clearly a top-down initiative, a community-based, participatory planning process, which includes an educational component, has the greatest chance for success in the mountain area. Second, a state technical assistance program, including both personnel and GIS technology, is essential. GIS is an important but expensive planning tool, and many mountain communities would not have either the fiscal or technical resources required for its use without state assistance. Third, the mandate to plan should include detailed guidance on the development of a comprehensive planning information base, which includes the full range of physical and cultural conditions that impact land-use decision-making. Lastly, the mountain area would benefit from a comprehensive and consistently applied planning methodology that links communities to the region and the region to the state.

The binding element to mandated planning is leadership at all levels of government. Some will view mandated planning as a threat, and some as an opportunity. If the mandate promotes planning as a process, the combination of participatory planning and tools such as GIS can help realize the goal of making communities throughout western North Carolina more livable. To plan or to continue not to plan. To mandate planning or to continue the status quo. These are difficult and complex decisions, best characterized by a poem by Robert Frost. Frost talks about two roads diverging in a woods, how he took the one less traveled by, and how it made all the difference. CP

## References

- Belknap, Raymond K. and John G. Furtado. *Three Approaches to Environmental Resource Analysis*. Washington, DC: The Conservation Foundation, 1967.
- Frost, Robert. *The Poetry of Robert Frost*. Edited by Edward C. Latham. New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1968.
- Gleeson, Michael G., et. al. *Urban Growth Management Systems*. Planning Advisory Service Report Nos. 309, 310. Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1975.
- McHarg, Ian. *Design With Nature*. Garden City: The Natural History Press, 1969.

# Exploring Outdoor Recreation in Western North Carolina

---

Brian F. Ahman

**R**ecreation and the great outdoors are a combination made in heaven and brought to Earth in western North Carolina (WNC). Estimates are that travel and tourism in the region will grow from the 1987 level of 8.0 percent of the region's total employment to 9.7 percent by 1995<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the North Carolina Division of Travel and Tourism calculated that tourism spending in WNC was \$862.6 million in 1991<sup>2</sup>. With hundreds-of-thousands of acres of public and private recreational lands available, outdoor recreation<sup>3</sup> is a significant component of this mountainous region's economy.

A recent study conducted by the Mountain Outdoor Recreation Alliance (MORA) shows that, in general, outdoor recreationalists using private lands in western North Carolina seek conveniently located destinations of natural beauty that also maintain a sense of 'getting away from it all.' Most outdoor recreationalists are visitors to the mountain region, either travelling together as a single family or as a group of unrelated friends, with the vast majority coming from states in the Southeast--North Carolina, Florida, South Carolina and Georgia. The most commonly identified factors which drew these visitors and keep them coming back are the scenic beauty and natural features in the region, the condition of recreational facilities and the helpfulness of employees. Given the importance of travel and tourism to the economy of WNC, it is essential to support outdoor recreation by maintaining the natural splendor of the region, preventing overuse and overcrowding of facilities, and improving travel to and within the region.

---

*Brian F. Ahman, MPM, is a researcher for the Natural Resources Division of Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living. He was the principal investigator and analyst for the MORA study. Mr. Ahman has a Masters in Project Management from Western Carolina University and a Bachelors of Science degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering from Ohio State University.*

## The MORA Study

MORA was formed as the first regional organization in western North Carolina dedicated to promoting a partnership between and among the private and public providers of outdoor recreation. Officially organized in 1987 as the result of work by an outdoor recreation task force organized by Western North Carolina Tomorrow, MORA was also designed to generate and distribute information and advocate the protection of the natural resources vital to outdoor recreation in WNC.

Although successful in enrolling individuals and organizations, MORA realized that useful information about outdoor recreational providers and participants, particularly within the private sector, was scarce. Better understanding of the backgrounds, needs and preferences of the outdoor recreational participants would enable providers, planners, policy makers and others to more effectively serve the recreational consumer.

MORA asked the Raleigh-based North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center to fund a pilot survey-research project, the 1990-1991 Western North Carolina Mountain Outdoor Recreation Research Project. MORA then contributed its own funds and received additional funding and technical support from Western North Carolina Tomorrow, Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living and School of Business, the United States Department of Agriculture's Forest Service [the Forest Service] and others.

The MORA study involved, among other things, research into selected private outdoor recreational activities in western North Carolina. The Forest Service's widely-used Public Area Recreation Visitors Study (PARVS) methodology and survey instruments were adapted, for the first time, for analysis of specific recreational activities in the private sector.

In this limited pilot study, MORA focused on camping, whitewater boating and golfing, just three components of the larger outdoor recreation market. The



Figure 1  
Visitor Residency Distribution

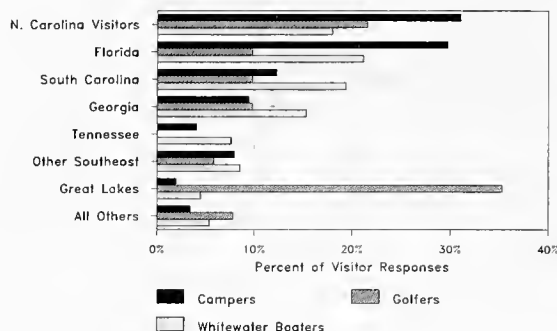
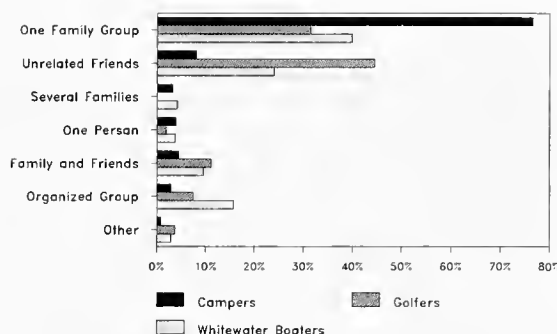


Figure 2  
Travel Group Description



MORA study randomly selected and interviewed nearly 1,000 campers, golfers and whitewater boaters during the summer and fall of 1990. Additional data were obtained from over 200 of these same study participants through a mailback survey. Analysis of the nearly 10,000 pages of survey data focused upon demographics, motivations, expenditures, activities, satisfactions, opinions and comments.

## Study Components

**Demographics.** Demographic analysis in the MORA study looked at the origin of visitors, the make-up of their groups and their education and income levels. The vast majority of campers and whitewater boaters surveyed were visitors to WNC, while slightly under one-half of the golfers did not have a place of residence in the region. In all, it was found that 79.6 percent of the campers, 43.6 percent of the golfers and 92.4 percent of the whitewater boaters were visitors to the region. Figure 1 presents a detailed residency distribution for visitors to western North Carolina. As shown in Figure 2, the most common type of travel group was the single family, followed by groups of unrelated friends traveling together. Camping was the most family-oriented of the

three activities, while golfers most frequently traveled with friends. The average size of the travel group was 4.8 people for campers, 7.6 for golfers and 7.4 for whitewater boaters.

As seen in Figure 3, whitewater boaters and golfers are significantly more educated than campers. Annual household income also varies by recreational activity. Campers had a mean annual household income of \$40,063, golfers, \$57,087, and whitewater boaters, \$49,755.<sup>4</sup>

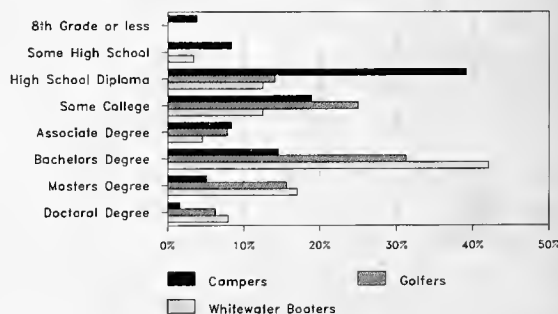
**Motivations.** Surveyed visitors traveled to WNC primarily for recreational purposes, choosing the region primarily because of its scenic beauty. (See figures 4 and 5.) 'Getting away from it all,' the convenience of the location, good facilities, repeat visits and 'just like the area' were secondary reasons for visiting WNC. Residents of WNC choose specific recreational sites for similar reasons as visitors, with scenic beauty and convenience of location as the two most common reasons.

**Expenditures.** Visitors to WNC spent, on an average daily basis, \$28.71 per person for campers, \$75.13 per person for golfers and \$56.85 per person for whitewater boaters. Regardless of activity, lodging is the largest expense, followed by food and beverage expenditures. (See figure 6.) In both cases, golfers spend more than either whitewater boaters or campers.

**Activities.** Figure 7 shows a breakdown of secondary activities of campers, golfers and boaters. Sightseeing, pleasure-walking and day-hiking were frequent activities for all three groups, as were picnicking and scenic photography. Campers, and to a lesser extent whitewater boaters, pursue many additional activities while golfers do little else but golf.

**Satisfaction statements.** Certain aspects of the recreational experience are crucial to the visitor's satisfaction. Regardless of activity, two issues are consistently important to visitors: the condition of the natural features and the helpfulness of facility employees. A third issue, the condition of the facilities, strongly affects the level of enjoyment for campers and whitewater boaters and moderately affects it for golfers. (See figure 8.)

Figure 3  
Distribution by Education Completed  
(Adults, 18 Years of Age and Older)



## Recommendations

The MORA study was designed and implemented as a pilot study; three of about 20 major outdoor recreational activities in WNC were examined. As such, the results of this study are tentative, due to a potential bias introduced by the limited survey period (the latter half of the season). Additional research is necessary to develop a comprehensive database on outdoor recreation in the region. Not only would this new research substantiate or refute the current findings, but it could also allow outdoor recreational providers and policy makers to more intelligently allocate scarce resources. Continued cooperation between individuals and organizations, both public and private, improves the region as a whole and enhances the experience of the outdoor recreational consumer. CP

*Editor's note: The User, Business, or Municipal and County Parks and Recreation Department Profile which resulted from the MORA study can be obtained from MORA, PO Box 1088, Cullowhee, NC, 28723. Cost of the reports vary and range from \$1.50 to \$4.00 per copy.*

Figure 4  
Purpose of Visit to WNC  
(Multiple Responses Allowed)

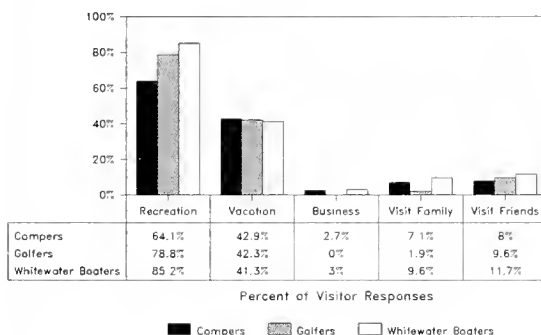
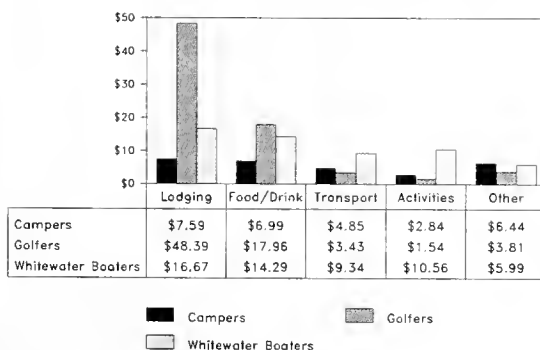


Figure 6  
Visitors' Daily per Person Expenditures



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>O'Conner, Frank, "Western North Carolina's Economy: The Role of Tourism and Travel", *Aspects of Economic Development*, Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living, Cullowhee, NC, v.4, no.1, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Johnson, Paul, "Tourism Tooling Along", *Asheville Citizen-Times*, Oct. 26, 1992, Section B, pg. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Typical outdoor recreational activities range from passive items, such as sightseeing and visiting outdoor attractions to active participation in endeavors, such as hiking, camping, fishing, boating, golfing and skiing.

<sup>4</sup>These figures for mean annual household income are all substantially higher than the figures for median household income. Median incomes are \$37,500, \$47,500 and \$42,500 for campers, golfers and whitewater boaters, respectively. All three income distribution curves were skewed toward the higher income levels. The income distribution for campers was roughly uniform, while the curve for whitewater boaters was approximately normally distributed. For golfers, the curve had an inverted normal, or 'M' shape with observed values clustered near \$35,000 and \$65,000.

Figure 5  
Reasons for Choosing to Visit WNC  
(Multiple Responses Allowed)

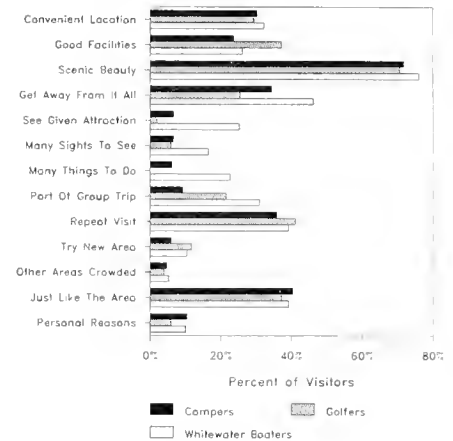


Figure 7  
Activities Done or Planned This Visit  
(Multiple Responses Allowed)

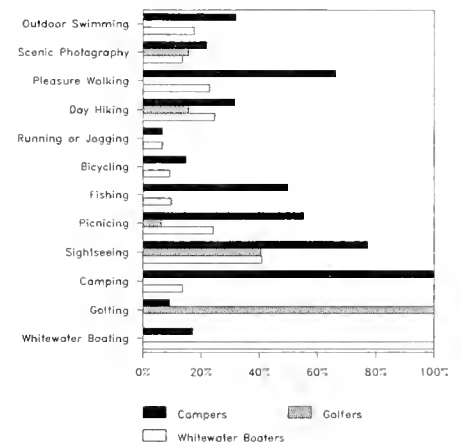
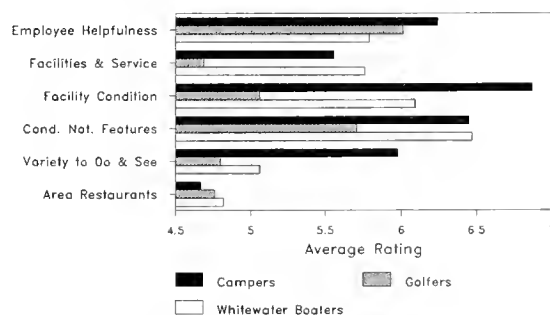


Figure 8  
Satisfaction Importance Ratings  
1=Low Importance 7=High Importance



# The Challenge of Land-Use Planning in Haywood County, or Real Planners Never Use Plan 'A'

---

Ginny Faust

**H**aywood County was one of 11 counties to receive funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission in the fall of 1991 as part of the Mountain Area Planning Program. The Division of Community Assistance of the North Carolina Department of Economic and Community Development administered the grant. The purpose of the grant was to allow counties to look at community growth issues and identify areas of concern that required action or needed further study, and then develop recommendations for addressing these issues. The grant outline specifically recognized that counties would be at different stages in planning and managing land uses, and a great deal of flexibility was built into the process to allow recipients to follow a program and prepare a report that best suited their needs.

In order to accomplish this task, the grant required that every county collect and analyze data on population, the economy and the natural and built environment; involve the community in identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as growth issues; develop recommendations; and then prepare a map that classified the county into general categories as outlined by the Division of Community Assistance. The grant proposal recommended a planning period of five to ten years for study. Grant money was to be spent within the year.

On the surface, this sounds like a typical planning exercise, where you plan the work and then work the plan. Involve the citizens and people will gain owner-

ship, ensuring that the plan will have a better chance of implementation. Public participation, where there are lots of opportunities for discussion, will help people become familiar with what you are doing, and in the end you will have a plan that provides a guideline for the future. Right?

Since I've asked the question, you have probably decided that something went wrong, and you are correct. Even though the outcome was totally contrary to what we had initially hoped for, we learned several valuable lessons. Perhaps if you are tackling a difficult project you may find our experience useful.

## In the beginning was Plan A

In the beginning, things went just great. I had come to Haywood County in June of 1991 to be the County Planner, replacing a woman who was retiring after 14 years. The Planning Department was merged with the Economic Development Commission shortly before I was hired, and their director, Rick Webb, became the new head of the department. Rick was a tremendous asset because not only was he a county native and knew all the people to include in the planning process, but he also had lots of experience in strategic planning. Also new to Haywood County was Jack Horton, the first full-time professional manager; he started work in March of 1991, coming from nearby Macon County. The five Commissioners had all been elected the previous December.

Rick Webb planned several all-day retreats with the Commissioners and Manager, which were intended to be information sessions on important issues including solid waste, land use, infrastructure and capital-improvement planning. Our first retreat, in August, dealt with solid waste issues. We successfully used the format of "Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going? Where Do We Want To Be And How Are We Going To Get There?" By the end of the day, it seemed that we had

---

*Ginny Faust grew up in Connecticut, went to school at Notre Dame and worked in Boston before she got her Master's in Planning at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She has since worked near Williamsburg, Virginia and for the City of Hendersonville, NC, before moving to Haywood County. When she's not at meetings listening to irate citizens, she works on her Plan B career, writing a murder mystery.*

a clear focus on how to approach several controversial areas of solid waste that faced the county in the future. My strong belief was reinforced that consensus does work, building ownership and teamwork.

This was exactly what we wrote about in our grant application, which we submitted in early October. We were invited to apply in September, so there wasn't much time to prepare. We talked about community education, consensus and ownership. We proposed three sets of public input sessions: an initial forum to obtain a "vision" of what the County should be in the future; a second to complete the strength and weakness analysis, develop goals and objectives and identify priorities for action; and a final one to present the plan. We also talked about forming a Steering Committee, representing a broad background of people, skills and concerns.

We were notified in late October that we were one of the recipients. We used part of the money to hire an intern from the Master's of Public Administration program at Western Carolina University, Bill Andrew, who worked part-time. We also used part of the money to hire a full-time assistant, Tom House, who had just graduated from the Bachelor's program in planning from Appalachian State. Tom's job was to help with the data collection and relieve me of some of my administrative responsibilities with the ordinances so I would have more time to devote to the grant. Both of them were a tremendous asset through the process.

The solid waste session went so well that we decided to use the same format for our next workshop, on land-use planning issues. It was scheduled for Friday, December 13. Does this sound like the beginning of a problem? The session was intended to be an educational process for the Board of Commissioners to learn more about land-use planning. It also gave them the opportunity to identify potential issues that would most likely need to be addressed in the future. We hoped that this would speed the arrival at consensus, once we had heard from the community about their concerns.

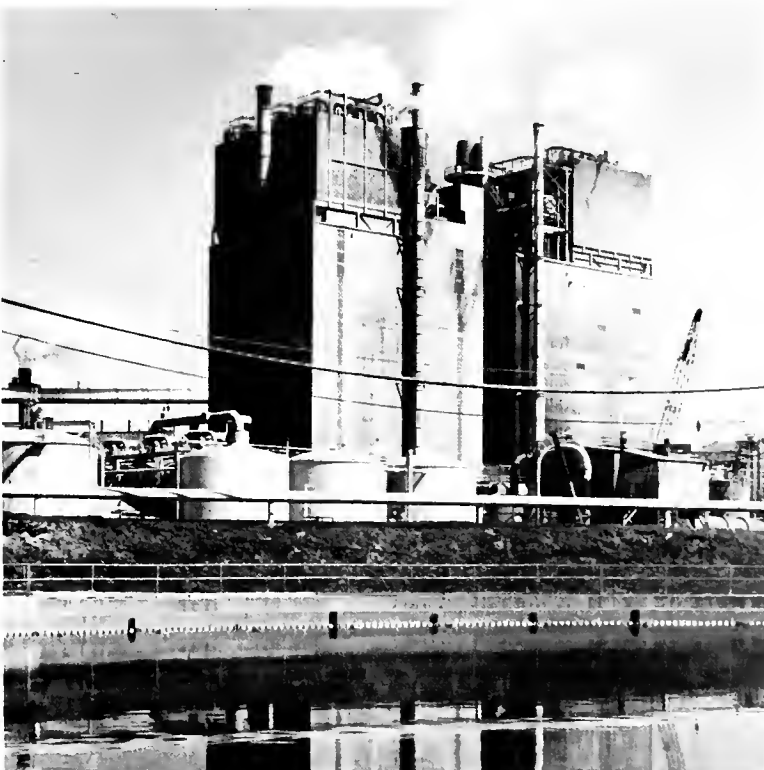
Without a doubt, that day was the highlight of my nine year planning career. With the help of the staff of the Asheville office of the Division of Community Assistance, we were able to identify and prioritize issues in three categories: appearance, development and quality of living. Several members of the Planning Board attended, as well as a reporter from the local paper. Rick prepared an educational video entitled, "Our Land, Our Future" which outlined land-use planning issues in Haywood County. It was shown for the first time that day, and helped to set the tone for the discussion to follow.

Haywood County is said to be the most mountainous county east of the Mississippi; it falls almost one mile in elevation from the highest point to the lowest. With a population of approximately 47,000, it still has a strong rural feeling. Part of the Great Smoky Mountain Na-

tional Park is located within its boundaries. With the exception of one small stream, every drop of surface and ground water originates in the county. It is a truly lovely place.

For many years, Champion Paper, the county's largest employer, and Dayco, a manufacturer of all kinds of rubber hoses, were the economic backbone of the county, and provided a steady supply of high-wage jobs for students graduating from high school. The Champion mill on the Pigeon River was recently the subject of a lawsuit from residents down river in Tennessee who object to the pollutants in the discharge. Agriculture is still an important part of the economy, but like everywhere else the farmers are getting older, and many farms have been sold for development. Tourism has also been a part of the county's economy, concentrated in the towns of Maggie Valley and Waynesville.

Several things have changed in the last few years, however. Dayco announced in the fall of 1988 that they would be reducing their workforce by 343 workers. County residents received a bigger shock in January 1989, when it looked as if Champion might be forced to shut down due to possible non-renewal of their discharge permit by EPA. Meetings were held and the nationally-recognized EASE (Economic Adjustment Strategy Effort) project was formulated to develop an approach to deal with this economic catastrophe. Rick Webb, who had been the Director of the Haywood Economic Development Commission for six months, and White Watkins, Assistant Secretary of the NC De-



*Champion International paper mill in Haywood County.*

partment of Commerce, co-chaired the project.

It was a big success because people came together. To demonstrate their commitment to the project, the state provided a planner for six months and economic development specialist for one year. A document was prepared that outlined many strategies for diversifying the economic base, strengthening existing industries, training workers and other approaches. The need for land-use planning came up in several of the committees, in the designation of industrial sites, increasing tourism and protecting the quality of life.

Even though Champion and Dayco did not close, the county has lost over 1,000 manufacturing jobs at its four major manufacturing facilities since 1988. The county has not attracted any new industry of significant size since the 1950's. People are worried about the loss of high-paying industrial jobs. Many people seeking second homes in the mountains have chosen Haywood County as their place to live in the summer. The easily-developed land has already been taken, however, which means that roads and houses are being placed on slopes of 30, 40, and 50 percent.

Haywood County does not have zoning. It does have what is called a Pre-Development Ordinance, which regulates the subdivision of land through a check-list review process. No road design standards, minimum lot sizes or setbacks are required. There is a flood plain ordinance, and the county has a person on staff to administer the sediment control ordinance. However, in the opinion of the county staff, there are many gaps in these ordinances. A landslide occurred above the town of Maggie Valley because of blasting to widen a switch-back in a steep road leading up to a subdivision. It is still visible miles away over a year later; the soil is so unstable it may never be able to support plants or trees, and the development of the subdivision has come to a halt. There is no junkyard or junk car ordinance, and the road leading to the county's only ski resort is lined with rusting cars, buses and trucks. Billboards line the entrance into Maggie Valley.

These were the issues that were addressed in the worksession with the County Commissioners in December. I showed slides of some of these land-use concerns, as did Johanna Francis, the Erosion Control Specialist. We both went over gaps in regulations in our present ordinances. I briefly talked about the Land-Use Guidance System, a more flexible way of approaching zoning, which had been implemented in Bedford County, Virginia and at the time was being considered in Burke County, North Carolina (it is now in place--see page 34).



*Suspension bridge across the east fork of the Pigeon River.*

In the afternoon the commissioners went through an exercises of identifying their main concerns, and then prioritized them. There was great similarity among all five on what their concerns were. Once again, consensus had worked. I was thrilled, and couldn't wait to get started on appointing the Steering Committee for the land-use grant after Christmas.

### **Here comes Plan B**

The local newspaper printed a story about what happened at the worksession. In the article, the reporter said that at the end of the session, the board had "sketched an informal course toward zoning." This was not what had been said at all, in my opinion, but I figured it didn't matter that much and we did not try to correct the misstatement. But many people read that statement and were most concerned. Over the holidays county residents who did not want further land-use controls started communicating with each other.

In early January 1992, a group of residents opposing land-use controls asked that the commissioners meet with them at one of the county elementary schools in the Crabtree community to discuss the board's increased attention to zoning issues. Because not all of the commissioners could attend, they decided not to go but scheduled another meeting a couple of weeks later. The citizens held their meeting anyway. The same reporter who had covered the worksession wrote an article about the Crabtree meeting, in which he said that the commissioners should have attended the meeting, even without one of their members. He also wrote that many people suspect the board has already made up its mind on zoning. He implied that the video we had prepared was "slick and packaged."

The five commissioners, County Manager, Erosion Control Specialist and I attended the second meeting in Crabtree in late January. About 260 people attended,



and most of them used the opportunity to voice their opposition to any kind of planning whatsoever. We showed the same slides we had used at the worksession, outlining land-use concerns; we also showed slides showing the beauty and heritage of the county. We did not show the video. One of the slides I showed was of a fence that was supposed to screen a junkyard. It had some old metal sheeting loosely attached and part of it had come away. The previous County Planner had taken the slide; I was using it to illustrate the importance of good screening requirements. After my presentation, one of the speakers pointed out that the fence wasn't there anymore and how could I in good conscience use an out-of-date slide?

The other speakers all gave their reasons why they were against landuse planning and zoning, which in their minds meant the same thing. After the meeting, I was criticized for showing so many negative slides of Haywood County. I was not successful in convincing people that I was trying to demonstrate that there were areas that might need attention; instead I seemed to be an outsider trying to run down their home.

A core group of people opposed to landuse planning organized themselves into the Haywood County Concerned Citizens Group. The Planning Board met with the County Commissioners in March to begin forming the Steering Committee as part of the next step of the land-use study. At their second joint meeting the Concerned Citizens came and demanded that the process be abandoned. It was only after a long, and at times acrimonious, debate that they agreed to participate--but only if they could appoint one-third of the members. They also asked that the name of the committee be changed from "steering" to "study" because, in the words of one of the members, when you say steering it implies you are going somewhere.

It took one more meeting, held on April 1, (are you beginning to see a pattern here?) for us to arrive at an agreement. In order to accommodate all the people who wanted to serve from the Concerned Citizens, as well as obtain the diversity in background and interests that we wanted, we ended up with 40 people on the Study Committee. We had our first meeting in late May; the study was due to end September 30. The size of the group made it awkward to have meetings where everyone could participate, but we tried our best by breaking into small groups.

### **What Happened to Goals and Objections?**

After several meetings, the Committee did decide to go out into the community and hold a series of ten public input sessions where people could give their comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the county, identify community growth issues and vote on their top three priorities. Before these sessions started, as part of public education and in an attempt to show that planning did

not necessarily mean zoning, I wrote an essay entitled "What is Planning?" [see sidebar] It was first distributed to the Committee members, and then appeared as an editorial in the local paper.

The ten sessions were held over an eight-week period, in all areas of the county. Many of the people who attended stated that they were opposed to land-use planning and zoning, although when we asked for specific instances of strengths, weaknesses and issues many pertinent concerns and ideas came out in the discussion. Some of these included whether a farmland preservation program was needed, the importance of clean water and whether it was better to have door-to-door garbage pick-up or to keep the scatter-site dumpsters and recycling areas called "convenience centers." After all the meetings had been held, we typed up nine pages of issues mentioned by the Study Committee or at the meetings. When it was time for the Study Committee to get together and identify specific recommendations for the commissioners, however, the Concerned Citizens said that only one statement should be forwarded--"that the Study Committee has determined that the consensus of the people of Haywood County who attended the meetings is that people don't want land-use planning or zoning." That was the only motion that passed.

The study report has been presented, in draft form, to the County Manager for his review. Then it goes to the Study Committee members and to the State, where it may reside peacefully on a shelf for years to come. Or, perhaps, it may be trotted out at some future date, when a land-use conflict comes to Haywood County and people want to think about their options for action.

### **Ten Precepts for Planners**

1. Figure out the context of a project before you get started. Have other things been happening that will affect how people will react to this one? Looking back, 1991 was not a good year for a land-use study in Haywood County, because two other land-use issues were already getting people excited--siting a new landfill, and dealing with the proposed watershed rules. Farmers were especially concerned that more regulations were going to drive them out of business; statements on our part that they would not be affected were not reassuring. Evidently, people have heard "I'm from the government and I'm here to help you" too many times.

2. Make sure that the local leadership is united to move forward on your project. Build consensus with your leaders with a clear game plan ahead of time. Keeping it may be trickier, however, especially if controversy is involved. After an initial period of consensus which had been achieved during their December worksession, the commissioners' views on how to pursue land-use planning began to diverge.

3. When you are new to an area or job, don't tackle a big project unless you are absolutely certain that the

### What is Planning?

Planning is looking ahead, so communities can figure out where they want to be in the future and then decide how they are going to get there. In order to make planning work, a community should have a vision of what it wants to be. Another way to think of this would be to consider what people like and want to save and what needs to be changed.

For the people of Haywood County, that means first asking lots of questions and then making decisions. For instance, should there be more water and sewer service? If so, where? Are the roads adequate? Which ones should be widened? Should the western part of the county receive natural gas? Does the county want to recruit more industry? Where would be the best location for it? Should tourism be more strongly emphasized as part of the county's economy, and what impact would that have? Should the county make a conscious effort to preserve farmland, and how can this be accomplished? Does the county need recreation programs? What about bike trails and walking paths? Are there any special areas that deserve special consideration, like habitat for rare or endangered species? Are there any historic buildings or sites that should be protected? Does a community need a new school, or has an existing school gotten too old so that it needs to be shut down? Should the convenience centers [trash and recycling drop off locations] be continued if the county begins door-to-door pick-up of garbage? How will all of these issues affect property values?

The answers to these questions are not always obvious and often create controversy. In some cases, these questions lead to more questions. Sometimes, deciding not to have something is also planning. After all these questions are considered, people may decide that the protection of individual property rights is their most important consideration, and therefore no further regulations are wanted. The free market economy will control where development occurs as well as what kind—but the local, state and federal governments still make decisions that affect development, such as the location of new gas, water and sewer lines and new or widened roads. These infrastructure improvements have a tremendous impact on what happens. With the right roads and utilities, an established residential or farming community could become the number one choice for industry; property values may triple in a tax revaluation and families may decide to sell, or not be able to afford to stay.

What is the role of the planner in all this? It may be helpful to think of a planner as an architect who is helping a family design a house. The family will probably already know what they need, like how big it should be, how many bedrooms and bathrooms they want and whether they can afford a finished basement. They may also have a picture in their mind about what they want

their house to look like. The architect then takes these ideas and comes up with alternative designs: one bedroom downstairs and two up, or all upstairs; the kitchen as a separate room or one connected to the dining room. The architect then presents these alternatives to the family, with the advantages of each design, and then they make the final decision. It is not the architect's job to tell the family whether they want a porch off the back; the family must decide that. He may tell them it will cost so much extra, or that a porch in that location won't work because it will block the sun in a certain room, however. It is the architect's duty to help the family make an informed decision so that their needs are met.

Accordingly, it is the planner's duty to help inform the citizens and commissioners about the natural and man-made assets of the county and what that might mean. If one mountain has unstable soils, the planner is charged with warning the county that continued development in that area may cause problems, and special precautions should be considered. New water and sewer lines in one valley could drive five productive farms out of business; located in another valley, it may not affect any. It is the job of the citizens and the commissioners to decide on goals and the policies to carry them out; then the planner informs the community what options there are to carry out these policies.

Another part of planning is anticipating what might occur in the future, and deciding what can be done now to take advantage of opportunities, or prevent problems from happening. We listen to the weather forecast so we know what clothes to wear, or if we need to bring an umbrella. That is planning ahead in the most basic sense. We are already going to build a new landfill and jail; are there other facilities that the county will need in the future? Where should they go? Should they have access to a major highway because they will cause a lot of traffic, or are they better suited to a remote area? How will we pay for them?

Some people may think that planning is the same as zoning. It is not. Zoning is only one of many tools to help communities control how land is developed, and it is not necessary at all for a community to use in order to plan. Adopting an ordinance that regulates junkyards or one that requires a soil study on certain slopes before blasting takes place is not zoning—it is planning. Deciding that some communities do not want water and sewer lines, for example, is also planning.

After debating the pros and cons of all the issues, if Haywood County decides to do nothing at all, then it would still have a plan. In ten or twenty years, people would not wonder how and why it developed the way it did—they would know. This land-use study grant is giving the citizens of Haywood County the opportunity to look around now and make some decisions about what they want the county to be and how they want to get there.

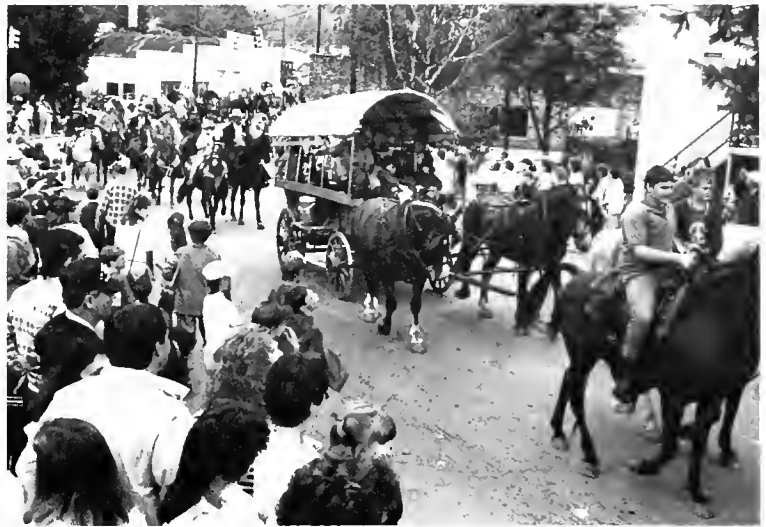
majority of people are behind it. I think this is especially true in the mountains, where "outsiders" are viewed with suspicion by many people, until they have proven themselves trustworthy. Perhaps I would have had more success presenting controversial ideas if I had had a couple of years under my belt as the county planner, and people already knew me.

If at all possible, pick a positive project first, where you can gain some trust and establish credibility. Try to make it something visible and concrete, as opposed to a new policy manual that only county employees will see. I am now beginning to work on naming all the roads in the county for Enhanced-911, which will include putting up road signs; later we will tackle addressing as well. Even though some people won't be happy that we have to re-name their road because it is a duplicate of a road elsewhere, most people have been enthusiastic about this, especially the Volunteer Fire Departments, who are well-respected members of their communities. After you have made a name for yourself as both a planner and a person, then you can think about moving towards something more controversial.

4. When involved in a controversial project, do your homework--out in the community--ahead of time. Do your best to create a constituency for your project. Try to line up prominent people (who may or may not be in the public eye) and obtain their support of the discussion at least, if not of the objective. We began a series of interviews in the spring, and discovered quiet support for the goals of land-use planning, even if people didn't call it that. By then it was really too late to help with the process.

5. Remember that in most cases the people opposed to something are the most highly motivated because they feel they have the most to lose. Before your project goes public, spend some time identifying the people who are likely to be involved and go talk with them. This also establishes a personal relationship and could help build your credibility. People may feel more kindly disposed to your views if you have made the effort to gain an understanding about their concerns and fears. Many times, they have valid reasons for feeling the way they do. If you can incorporate their concerns and ideas into your proposal from the very beginning, you may defuse some of the opposition you face as well as gain respect as a person who doesn't think she has all the answers. The fewer negative issues you have to deal with, the more likely you are to get positive results.

6. Repeat after me: "The process is as important as the product." Share as much information as you can with everyone who is interested, even if you think it would be irrelevant or boring. I made the mistake of thinking that the grant guidelines we had received from the state and the application I wrote to receive funding might be confusing to people not used to planning terms. Towards the very end of the summer, I happened to men-



*Labor Day parade in Canton.*

tion the guidelines and ears perked right up. What was this? Can we see it? So I made copies of both documents and gave them to the few who asked for them; they were passed out among the Concerned Citizens and my last meeting had the added burden of assuring people that I was not trying to keep information from them. The personal relationships you establish with each project may do more to help you and the profession than any article that is written. People may not always remember a fact or something they've read, but they always remember you as a person. If you are fair and open, you will earn the respect of the community over time.

7. Make sure you have adequate time to do your job. We were hampered by the fact that we only had a year to do the data collection, hold the meetings, and then come up with recommendations. People asked us several times what the rush was, and they were not satisfied when I explained that it was because of the grant. I got the feeling that they thought I was trying to slip something past them in the hurry to finish. Most land-use studies take a couple of years at least, and since this was Haywood's first one in over 20 years, we needed more time to build trust and work towards consensus.

8. Make sure that all your facts and examples are completely accurate. People who don't want the project to succeed will seize on the slightest inconsistency to show that you are wrong. After I showed the old slide of the junkyard fence, on several occasions people used that to demonstrate that I didn't know Haywood County.

9. Find examples, nearby if possible, of instances where a similar project has been implemented and is now working. Planners especially need to be identifying places where land-use planning has created jobs, preserved the environment, protected neighborhoods and improved the quality of life. Saying it's a good thing isn't enough to win over your skeptics--they want evidence.

10. Maintain your sense of humor at all times! Remember--this crisis, too, shall pass. CP

# Planning Challenges Facing Western North Carolina

---

Susan M. Smith

**I**n many respects, the problems, hopes and possibilities of the mountain region of North Carolina today center around a centuries-old concern of mountain families: How can this generation protect and improve the quality of life of those who live in the region today and in the future? Thirty years ago, few residents or visitors to the mountain region would have specifically cited issues such as acid rain, air pollution, litter and visual blight, disposal of household and industrial wastes, or any of a dozen other impacts on the environment as critical concerns. They did, however, value the seemingly everlasting scenic beauty and natural resources offered by the mountains.

Over the past thirty years, the mountain region has become less isolated--many family farms have given way to factories, interstate highways, housing developments, golf courses and other modern-day land uses. Many of these changes were made to move the region into the twentieth century and to attempt to improve the quality of jobs, education, and recreation. Today, 21 million people visit the Blue Ridge Parkway each year; another 8.7 million visit the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Forest service officials estimate that over 27 million people visit the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. The increase in the popularity of ski resorts and top-quality golf courses in Western North Carolina further demonstrates the region's growing attraction as a destination point for outdoor recreation. In the 1980s, Rand McNally named Asheville the best small city in

which to live, and Hendersonville and Brevard were cited as two of the best small retirement cities in the nation. ("Our Land. . .Our Legacy Discussion Guide," Western North Carolina Tomorrow, Cullowhee, NC, 1992)

The growth of the region in the past thirty years has created problems. Since 1984, farmer-owned land in Western North Carolina has decreased by 22 percent, twice the state average, and private forest land has diminished by 16,000 acres. In many of the mountain counties absentee ownership exceeds 50 percent. As more people visit and move into the region, interest in protection against visual blight, incompatible land-uses, and poor road construction have increased, and concerns about environmental issues such as acid rain, air pollution, water quality and erosion control have grown.

This focus on protection of the region's resources has led to an increased emphasis on public discussion of land-policy issues. Since 1980, one of the regional organizations that has taken an active interest in public participation in critical issues related to land has been Western North Carolina Tomorrow (WNCT). This nonprofit organization, which covers the 17 westernmost counties of Western North Carolina, is composed of eighty citizen leaders with broad-based experience. WNCT has focused on the necessity of effective citizen participation in wise land-management decisions affecting the growth and prosperity of Western North Carolina. This includes support for the Mountain Ridge Protection Act (Ridge Law), sponsorship of regional training programs, and active involvement in related practical projects. To help local organizations increase discussion about rural land management, WNCT organized a series of community forums in western North Carolina. The series, entitled "Our Land. . .Our Legacy," received funding support from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and other organizations.

---

*Susan M. Smith, Ed.D., has served as Associate Director of Natural Resources at Western Carolina University's Center for Improving Mountain Living since 1978. Ms. Smith is also an instrumental part of numerous organizations dedicated to improving the western North Carolina Region such as the Mountain Outdoor Recreation Alliance and Western North Carolina Tomorrow.*

WNCT's regional forum program provided community-level opportunities for public discussion about the complex issue of land use in Western North Carolina. Although no specific plan or action was promoted by WNCT in the forums, the programs helped raise awareness of the values and issues associated with land and its use. These community forums were held in September and October, 1992 and culminated with a regional conference, also sponsored by WNCT, at Lake Junaluska on November 10, 1992. The regional conference brought together key policymakers and participants from community forums to discuss issues raised at the meetings.

The forum programs attracted over 1,000 citizens from Western North Carolina. WNCT produced a fifteen-minute video to serve as a forum opener and encourage audience participation. The video presentation was not one of advocacy, but one of information. It offered contrasting viewpoints, and asked participants to respond to the question; "In your opinion, what role, if any, should your community, county, region and state government play in land-use planning?"

Responses to this question at both the community forums and regional conference provided information which WNCT shared with key state and regional officials, legislative study commissions and local policymakers and organizations.

Ten forums were held throughout western North Carolina, with each one cosponsored by at least one

local organization. Among the sponsoring organizations were chambers of commerce, citizen task forces, colleges, the League of Women Voters, planning boards, councils of government and the League of Property Owners. Although forums were held in specific counties, participants were not limited to those from that specific county. Participants were asked to follow a similar process at all forums. They were not encouraged to form a consensus, but were asked to list and discuss as many ideas as possible and to ensure that all had an opportunity to have their ideas recorded. In some cases, however, a consensus was generated. In others, a wide variety of ideas, issues and recommendations were formed, representing divergent views. The following list includes many of the key issues raised at a majority of the local WNCT land-use forums:

- There are differences between the mountain region and the other regions of the state. It is important for any programs designed for western North Carolina to recognize the unique characteristics of the region.
- Mountain people want to make recommendations and decisions about their own planning needs, rather than have those from outside the region tell them what to do.
- Any practical application of programs in planning--such as the development of a specific plan outlining



*View of Lake Junaluska from the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference Center for the Methodist Assembly.*



future needs--should be prepared and implemented at the local level, through the community, town or county.

- Both planning and regulatory programs should provide for a maximum of public participation at the most local level possible. It was recommended that the community level, as well as the county level, be involved in planning and regulatory programs in a specific way. Forum-type educational programs should be continued to extend discussion opportunities. Additionally, governments should develop a process to better inform people about existing regulations.
- Past state environmental regulation efforts have ignored local involvement and resulted in programs that were difficult to apply at the county level. The process used to develop the current watershed protection program was frequently listed as what not to do in the future.
- State laws or rules requiring each county plan with specific elements, should provide choices at the local level. Several groups recommended these choices include provisions similar to those of the North Carolina Ridge Law, which allowed counties to either follow the state requirements, pass a local program that is comparable to the state program, or offer local voters the option to do neither through a referendum.
- At each forum, some participants indicated that no additional effort should be undertaken by the community or state to promote planning or regulation. This view was dominant at one county forum.
- Governments should not mandate any programs--planning or regulatory--unless they provide resources to cover the costs involved in implementation.
- Groups at a majority of forums outlined roles for the state including: funding; setting broad guidelines; requiring that local governments plan; protecting natural or economic resources which are valuable to more than one county; providing incentives or disincentives; increasing information and education; increasing discussion of land use; and providing technical assistance.
- Effective planning efforts must be long-term rather than short-term. Sporadic efforts are of little use and, in some cases, cause harm. Communities, counties, and the region need a long-range vision. Future local planning projects promoted or established by the state should be three to five years in length, be adequately funded and be provided with necessary staff and equipment. Some current one-year efforts were considered unrealistic and under-funded, promoting no long-term commitments.

- Many forum participants lumped planning and regulation, such as zoning, together. In many forum groups, it was noted that planning does not have to mean zoning.

- Some citizens view planning as a tool used by others to regulate their land and reduce their rights. Many other citizens, however, believe planning is needed in western North Carolina to protect them, their property and the resources of future generations.

New plans and programs that are developed to guide future growth in western North Carolina must account for the concerns of mountain people. Measures for predicting the success of future planning or regulatory programs targeting the mountain region are essential. The following guidelines were developed from the WNCT forums.

### Measures for Success of Land-Use Programs

1. Balance individual rights and protection of property rights for all community members.
2. Incorporate public participation at the community and county level (and, when appropriate, at the regional and state level) in both planning and implementation of the program.
3. Allow practical implementation in rural communities.
4. Provide equitable program application and regulation.
5. Recognize geographic differences in the state and addresses issues specific to the mountain region.
6. Address needs that have been locally identified rather than imposed from the state capital.
7. Establish the state's role as enunciating broad guidelines, representing regional or state concerns, and facilitating implementation, while delegating the development of specific plans and implementation strategies to the local community or county.
8. Provide realistic funding to assure full implementation at the state, regional, county and community levels.
9. Provide a formalized mechanism for periodic review and reassessment of local, regional and state goals and implementation strategies.

In developing programs, policy makers and planners must recognize the unique nature of western North Carolina. Using guidelines such as these, governments can design successful programs aimed at effectively managing growth in the region. CP



Carolina Planning  
The University of North Carolina  
CB# 3140, New East Building  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3140

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 177  
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-1110

**Carolina Planning**